

PUNCH AUGUST 31 1960

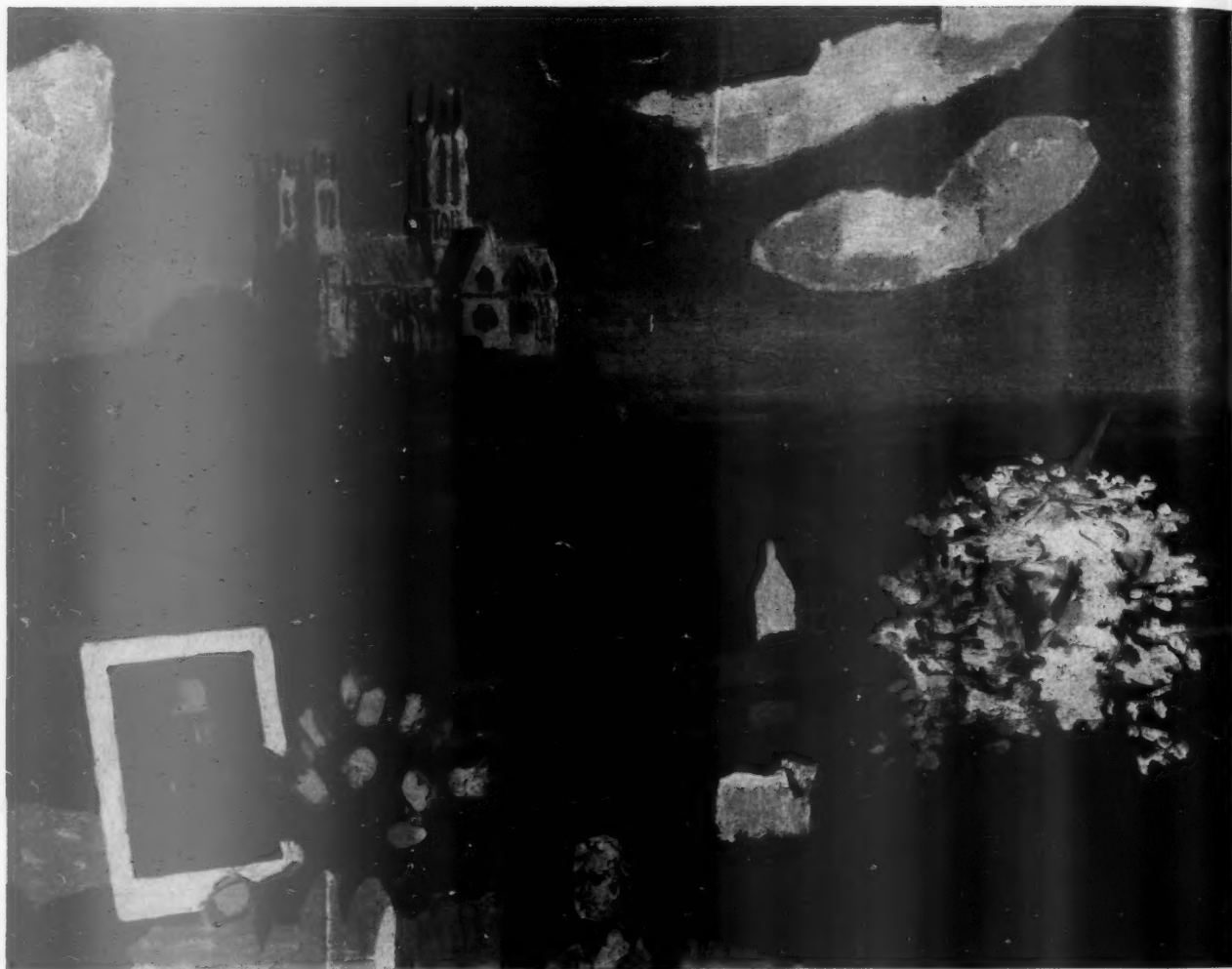
Vol. CXXXIII

Punch

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Painted by Kenneth Rowntree

Shell guide to LINCOLNSHIRE



Ben Jonson wrote of "the drowned lands of Lincolnshire"; but this county is not all fen and drain and windmill (1). Above sea and fen, it is also the rolling farmland of the wolds. Lincoln — once the Roman city of Lindum Colonia, in this area of long Roman roads — climbs a steep hillside to a cathedral (2), built between the 11th and 15th centuries, of incomparable grandeur, prominence, and patterned surface, thrusting itself into huge skies. The Roman canal of Foss Dyke runs north-west of Lincoln. To the south, tulip fields flaunt their pigments around Spalding; and this shire raised the Lincolnshire Longwools (3), a foundation breed of the modern sheep population of the world.

The tulips (4) here are bunched by Lincolnshire's poet, Alfred Tennyson (5), born in the rectory at Somersby in 1809, in the wolds between Lincoln and the sea. He wrote his *Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea* about the Somersby stream which becomes the Steeping River, and imagined the moated grange of his *Mariana* to be some ancient house in the fens. Isaac Newton (6), greater among men than Lincoln Cathedral among buildings, was born in Colsterworth parish, south of Grantham, in 1642. These two Lincolnshire natives are as opposite as wold and fen. Asked his opinion of poetry, Newton called it "a kind of ingenious nonsense". Asked about himself, he was perhaps thinking of the wide sands of the Wash, when he replied that he had been only a boy playing on the shore, "diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, while the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me".

The "Shell Guide to Wild Life", a monthly series depicting animals and plants in their natural surroundings, which gave so many people pleasure last year, is published in book form by Phoenix House Ltd. at 7/6. The "Shell Guide to Trees" and "Shell Guide to Flowers of the Countryside" are also available at 7/6 each. On sale at bookshops and bookstalls. In U.S.A. from Transatlantic Art. Inc., Hollywood by the sea, Florida, \$2.00

YOU CAN BE SURE OF



The key to the Countryside

PUNCH

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The London Charivari

VERY top executives in America have switches to turn off the bursts of "pep music" with which the energies of office-workers are stimulated after lunch and at other key times. This is a step in the right direction; the really high-level man ought to be able to opt out—no more neighbourliness or taking an active part in the firm's dramatic society or using the canteen. He might even refuse to have his office redesigned each year by an interior decorator. A man who is the real tops, could probably insist on having shabby old furniture he has grown used to and walking upstairs instead of using his personal lift. And he need never dip into the glossy magazines to see what the ambitious up-and-coming executive's office has in the way of gadgets.

Class Struggle

FROM Palo Alto, California, comes the news that Mr. Tanju Ergil, Turkish-born, 38-year-old, 5-foot-9-inch, 145-pound teacher of mathematics and languages, establishes what he calls a "close relationship" between himself

they were not interested in being: now I was one of them—but better educated, and from then on they *wanted* to learn." I know some schoolmasters in black-board jungles nearer home who would welcome instruction from Mr. Ergil merely for the sake of survival.

Straws in the Hair

EVEN to those of us who believe that divination by birds' entrails or the improved Scottish method of taghairm (divination by lying behind a waterfall clothed in a bullock's hide) is as reliable as a sample poll, the figures



produced by Senator Gore of Tennessee in his attack on the straw vote mystique came as a bit of a shock. Dr. Gallup's "national sampling unit," he said, was composed of thirteen ten-thousandths of one per cent of the adult population of the United States, or 1,500 people. Fifty million Frenchmen can't be wrong, they say, but fifteen hundred Americans can, and have been, as Dewey-eyed psephologists may recall.

Freedom Singers

LAST Thursday, after it had been announced that the *Daily Herald* had thrown off the shackles of the Labour Party and the T.U.C. (except in so far as the "general principles" of



and his more difficult pupils by defeating them on the wrestling mat. "Street fighting and wrestling was something they would understand," he explains. "Before, I had represented something



"September, October, November, December, January, February, March, April, May—the lads have got plenty of time to improve."

the old Labour affiliation are concerned), I was delighted to hear workmen in Bouverie Street roaring a revivalist hymn tune. I caught the words "Soon shall your sons be free . . ." and marvelled at the enthusiasm engendered by the *Herald* story. Then I realized that I had heard the words only an hour earlier in radio's Morning Music and that a subliminal hangover and not hopes for the *Herald* was responsible for the musical outburst. I was mildly disillusioned.

Fourpenny One

NEWSPAPER placards do not always read as their authors intend, as the now defunct *Illustrated Sunday Herald* found when, quoting Shaw's opinion of the destruction by fire of Stratford Memorial Theatre, they curtly informed their readers:

ILLUSTRATED SUNDAY
HERALD
"BETTER BURNED,"
SAYS G.B.S.

A similar effect was achieved last week by the *City Press*, who put the price of their paper in a bold figure on the contents bill:

THOMSON SAYS
I WOULD BUY
DAILY HERALD 4d.

Out of Date Model

THE former French colonies in West Africa seem to be preserving one tradition now almost dead in metropolitan France—a rapid turnover of governments.

No Food Like Old Food

THE papers are always reporting survivals of food and drink in Arctic cairns or Egyptian tombs and experts in this curious branch of epicurism even eat these unattractive revenants on television, though usually as isolated courses. What a publicity-attracting banquet you could put on if you assembled food from every century, wheaten cakes, tinned pemmican, the sediment of a cache of Falernian, with each dish as well as each wine given its vintage on the menu. I pass the idea on to Gilbert Harding.

Clip Joints

I DON'T know what British film companies think of the report from Durban about a hairdresser who entices customers in for a haircut by throwing in a free film-show—unless it strikes them that it might be an idea to entice customers into their undercrowded cinemas by throwing in a free haircut.

No Rose in all the World

CUSTOMERS paying 14s. 3d. a bottle for "Exultation of Flowers," a preparation consisting of pure water

into which, the inventor claims, the electrical impulses of flowers have been channelled by a secret process so that it will keep you young and fit for life, should make one stipulation. It should be packed in a Black Box.

Linguistics, Latest

REPORTS streaming in from the continent seem to show that the English language is still spreading. Half the packaged products on the common market carry an English trade name—"Quick!", "Joy", "Cosy", and so on. Even more remarkable, if more limited in vocabulary, is the field of popular song. A singer at a Mediterranean café has been heard performing in five languages, neatly unifying his act by making "Baby" (a term of endearment) the only intelligible word in each. Of course it may not last. Look what has happened to "Chérie."

No Hip Chick

WHEN Lady Jane Vane-Tempest-Stewart's holiday party anchored off a Greek island full of monasteries she was forbidden to land, and remarked "It's a swiz." (I quote a reliable gossip column.) There must be many who thought that this expression had gone out before their hair had even begun to recede, and here it is, the living language of to-day. It's hard to dig.

As Torn by Cleopatra

THE value of a goblet on sale at the Kensington Antiques Fair is, apparently, much enhanced by a crack said to have been made by Napoleon: he lost his temper during his Elba period. Similarly, no doubt, carpets gnawed by Hitler or even books with beer-stains left by Swinburne will have more sales-allure than the perfect article. No doubt, too, new Van Meegerens are learning how to chip pottery as Attila would have chipped it and how to fake Ruskin's toothmarks on silver.

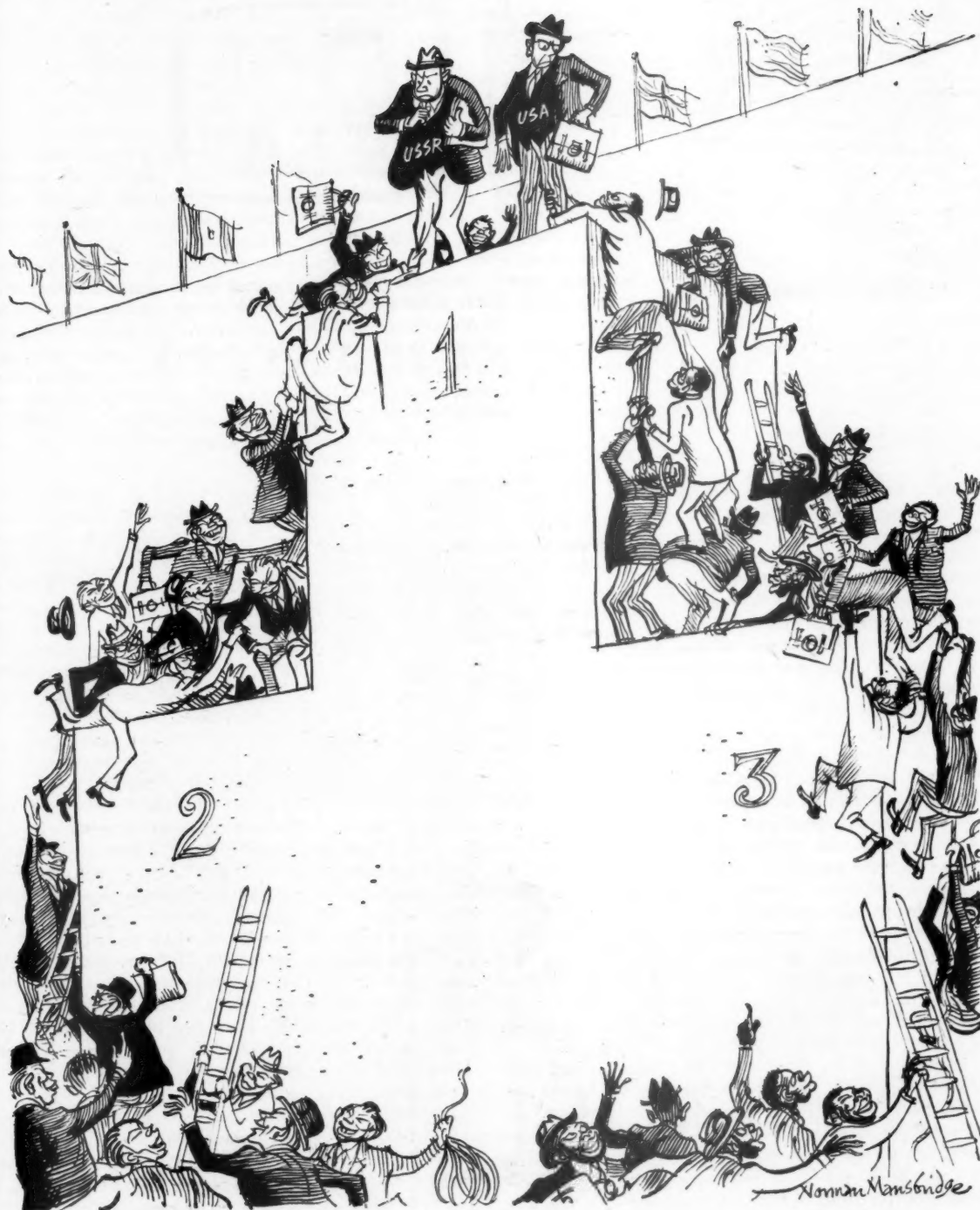
Actuarial Note

IN the closing week of its latest competition the *Daily Express* en-joined its readers: "Be a Two Car Family: Last Three Days!" I'll stick to one, and last longer.

— MR. PUNCH

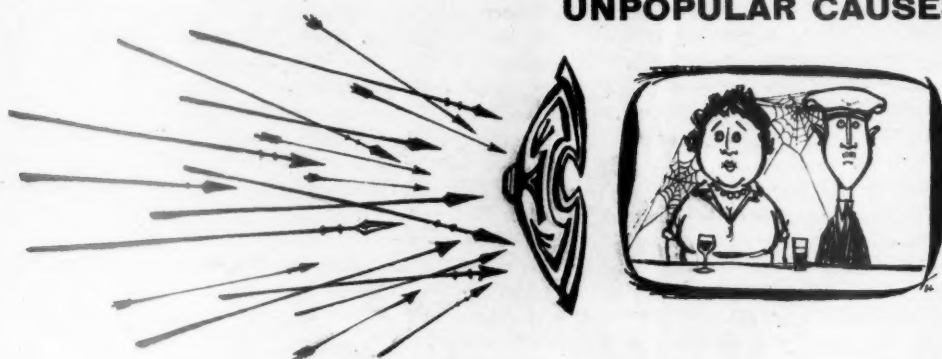


"Saliva positives. Now may I please get on with pure research?"



THE STATUS SEEKERS

UNPOPULAR CAUSES



In Defence of STAGNATION

by Dennis Potter

THE neon-lit pop singer jerking over the microphone as if in orgasm is popular in the long grey streets of back-to-back houses and marching chimney pots, the old man with straggling moustache and polished watch chain likes the telly commercials in between "Wagon Train" and the Epilogue, and the country labourer in a tied cottage easily reconciles the juke box in the thatched village with his master's milking machine and pictures of the Royal Family in his *Daily Sketch*. What can we do but accept, certain that nothing we can do will dent the profound English regard for the ludicrous, the earnest reliance upon Stagnation? Like road safety, Progress is an alien and unnatural concept, dependent upon thought rather than experience, planning instead of speculation and "compassion" instead of tradition. We have to admit that one essential philosophy casts light upon our administration, law, education, armed forces and Football League. All are held in a blessedly English unity by the relief, the comfort and the sound common sense of Stagnation. Of course we often use other words (in the same manner that we call Lord Home the "Foreign Secretary," a gift which shows our poetic humour), words like Tradition, Heritage, The Ability to Compromise. As Nato is our faith, and Transport House our conscience, we can admit to ourselves that all these words, all these noble banners, mean only Stagnation. This is our sole claim to political genius, and one I do not want us to forget.

The real value of political Stagnation has been well illustrated of late. The Opposition argues not with the Government, but with itself. Controversy does not threaten stability, and can in no circumstances bring about any legislative change. Change is a necessary condition of all progress, and it is this which finally damns it. Radicalism of any kind contains within itself the seeds of ultimate destruction. It would be better to stand up in stagnation and perish rather than live on our knees under conditions which brought change and progress to replace the familiar lethargy we find necessary in

all aspects of our lives. Imagine for one horrible moment what it would be like to be a progressive in Britain; you would have to place yourself outside all the things which are respected and lauded in our society; your children would have to go through our unprogressive educational system; you would not be able to enjoy a single magazine or newspaper, or even share the conversational assumptions of your fellow citizens. Progress means alienation and metropolitan coffee bars, minority delusions and hamburgers. How would you like your sister to marry a progressive, and what would happen to the children of such an unnatural relationship?

The most commonly stated difference between progress and stagnation is that the former is challenging and exciting, while the latter is dull, grey, and wretched. Precisely the opposite is the real situation. If this were realized more frequently there would be far less romantic soul-searching from the atheists and free-thinkers who have the temerity to describe themselves as on the side of the angels. Progress is dull because it is predictable. It needs research, effort, argument and single-minded obsession. And the results can never be seen by those who strive for them. There is no final stage where we can say that the "progressive" society has been achieved. Christians have long since seen through this condition, and in their reliance upon the essential iniquity of man or the unknowable complexity of God's purpose have provided the theological weapons in the armoury of the stagnatist. All things are as they are, and that's that.

Stagnation, on the other hand (the use of this phrase is in itself proof that we can only communicate with the language of the lethargic), is shot through with unpredictability and gentle English poetry. How nice to be able to place a man immediately by his speech and his tie, producing the far greater equity of personal success by parental effort and attention to phonetics rather than the more sparsely distributed and doubtful dependence upon mere intelligence. All societies should be arranged more for the benefit of the stupid and the

selfish than the abstract and unattainable ideals of the intellect. Without appeals to the stupid and the selfish advertising could not flourish, and, as we have so often been assured, without a flourishing advertising industry we would lose most of "the good things in life." It seems to me important to keep our striped tooth paste and fifty deodorants if by doing so we are defending our heritage.

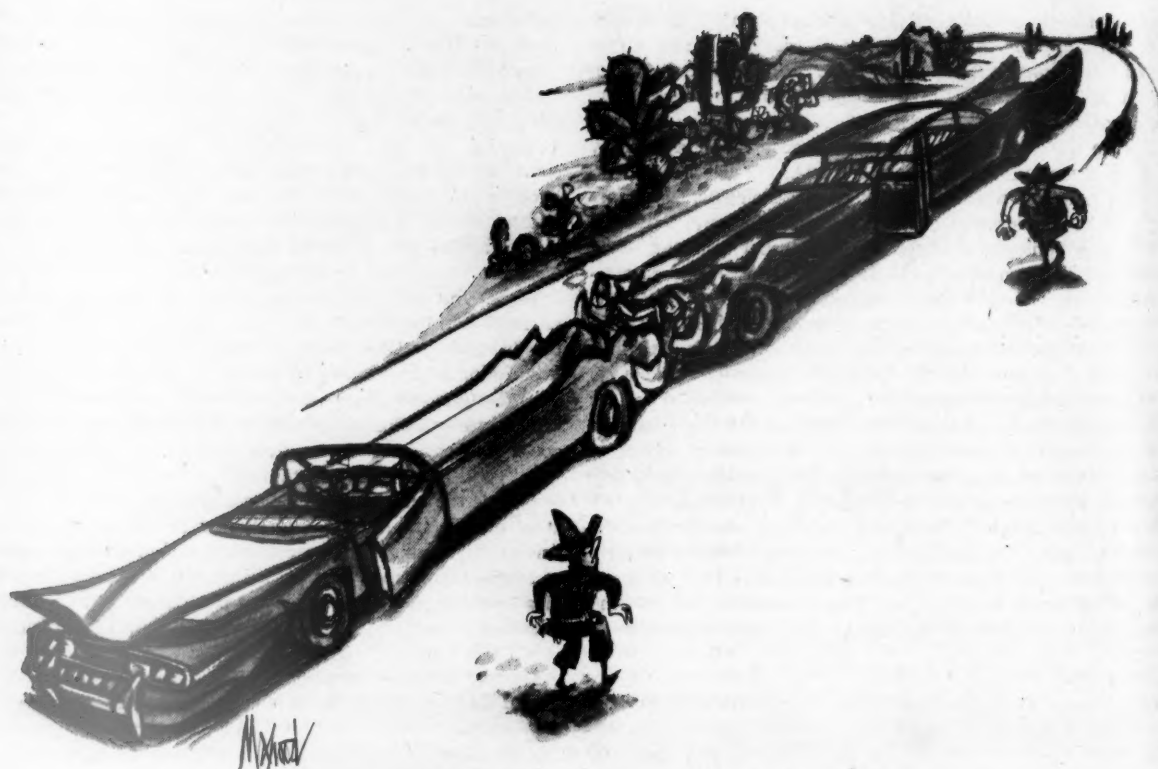
But I do not want to give the impression that those who accept the philosophy of stagnation are thereby precluded from a full enjoyment of the wiles of subtlety and the heady language of "progress." Far from it. Those who are anti-progressive are in a much better position to exploit the progressive terminology, simply because the chasm between belief and the expression of that belief is at its widest in a stagnatory society. As Mr. Gaitskell pointed out, and he is a master of this technique, "it is perfectly possible to pay for the social reforms we regard as urgent and necessary without any increase in the rates of taxation." Both parties rely upon a two-stage advance (or retreat) to the popularity of stagnation. First, we pretend to alter the basic structure of a few very unprofitable industries by the ossifying and cumbersome act of so-called "nationalization," retaining the same management personnel wherever possible, and then, after a sufficient period of heavy loss and bad labour relations, we give the death-blow and talk of making the industries responsible to

Parliament, the very apex of the stagnatory pyramid. Or again, we first use the slogan "fair shares for all," a wildly progressive delusion, and then consummate the achievement by the admission of the Conservative minister and former company director that "we are all workers now."

Progress not only implies change, which in itself runs counter to the traditions of a Parliament which promulgates its laws in Norman French, but also means change for the better. Hence its mainspring is the sour, griping feeling of dissatisfaction with things as they are. There are those, for instance, who object to sewage deposited upon the holiday beaches. But by bringing such things into open discussion, far more harm is likely to be done: our tourist trade will not benefit, and the Olde England posters of the British Travel Association begin to take on an air of unnecessary realism. Why denigrate the things that are "bad," a radical trait, if it brings into question those that are universally agreed to be good? Stagnation is all of a piece, and cannot be fragmented into "good" and "bad" in the style of the reformer, seeking to change the one without challenging the basis of the other. It is because the stagnatist holds that no single reform, no "marginal" change can be contained within the easy limits of small-scale change that he wishes *this* to remain the best of all possible worlds. Radicalism is a danger in that things which seem not to be related are suddenly shown to be linked,



"Quickly, tell me—did Hutton break the record at the Oval?"



making change a continually reverberating and revolutionary force. Stagnation, while appearing to accept the consequences of certain forms of "change" ("the wind of," etc.), has the great and final merit of claiming that the more things change, the more they should remain the same. Thus, Oxford and Cambridge open their mediaeval gates a little wider, but at the same time further increase their prestige at the expense of the provincial universities; public schools flourish as never before in the teeth of superficial egalitarianism; and the would-be Socialist government expresses a desire to enter the share market. We have the best of all worlds, like the dying millionaire who gives a fat bequest to a holy institution and goes to heaven like Cotton through the eye of a needle.

The complexity of modern industry and the immense cost of building the smallest fly-over or the tiniest nuclear submarine makes it extremely difficult to mouth the platitudes of the progressive and more than ever a relief to fall back on the acknowledged, subtle complexities of full-blown stagnation. Crosland for one is so bewildered with the contradictions and ramifications of modern capitalism that he changes the labels and describes it as "post-capitalism." As soon as radicals start admitting that the beast has changed its nature they are half-way to accepting the sensible resignation that is so much a part of the stagnatist position. Progressives demand simple postures as if "justice" were a realizable concept and "democracy" a genuine ideology. But stagnatists are content

to use fresh terminology, to widen the definitions of "the free world," to talk of compromise and responsibility, and, as President Eisenhower would put it, sensibly admit that it is worth a little lying and cheating to maintain our honour. Without this sense of reality there would be some danger of moving towards fresh positions, threatening not only domestic but international stagnation. The consequences of such change would be disastrous. ITV would be unable to show the majority of the old American films which they keep in stock should "Double Your Money" break down, since all these films have a way of life to defend against international communism. And this brings us to a very important point: anything which interferes with television must, by definition, be more dangerous than a thousand hydrogen bombs. Stagnation can be seen to best advantage on a seventeen-inch screen, but the progressive would have us suffer meaningful and sometimes serious programmes. We are safe, therefore, from their fantasies and deadly idealism, for no citizen of our stable and mature democracy would ever allow such a calamity. Let us be known by our aerials and our washing powders, safe and sound with stagnation, the ultimate point to which we are moving. The moon must remain blue, and never mind about the sewage we can see by its light. The sun will rise each morning, whiter than white.

Next week:

In Defence of Excess, by Katherine Whitehorn

An Hour on A40

By H. F. ELLIS

HERE then beside me, for another thirty-five miles at least, is this incommunicable young man with a pack across his knees and an indefinable air of having been in better cars in his time. For an hour, less or more, the threads of our several lives will run together along A40, but it does not look as if anything rich or strange will come of the convergence. "How far are you going?" was his first remark as he opened the nearside door, and so far it remains by several words his longest utterance. I have tried this and, because after a mile or two silence seems oppressive, I have tried that. I have asked him, a little unnecessarily it may be thought, whether he is on holiday, and he has told me, after stubbing his cigarette out on the sole of his shoe, No. I have observed, at a time when she was going like a bomb up the long hill out of West Wycombe, that my car is not as young as she was, and had to be satisfied with a nod. Other comments, on the weather and the passing scene, have with increasing difficulty escaped the barrier of my teeth, not in every case absolutely calling for a reply and invariably getting none. And now I have given myself up to hate.

There is nothing personal about this hatred, or at least nothing exclusive. This dumb self-centred heap alongside might as well be any of the dozen or so of his monstrous tribe whose scythe-like sweeps I ignored this morning before the final surrender. He is just a type. An a-typical type, perhaps. It is true

that in all my experience I never lifted a more unyielding take-it-for-granted mass of dough from the roadside; and it may be that had I stopped instead for the two soldiers at Gerrards Cross, or the bearded man beyond Beaconsfield, or these two knobbly women sitting on a gate, who do not look up or interrupt their talk but simply go through the motions as they sense the car's approach, like fledglings stimulated to open their beaks when the nest is touched—it may be that all would have been gas and gaiters, and not a curmudgeonly thought this side of Cheltenham. But no matter. I hate them all.

"How far are you going?" Here is the quintessence of impertinence. State your destination, so that I may decide whether it is worth my while getting in. I am not some raw beginner content with a ten-mile stretch and then all the trouble of thumbing to do again. No, no, you won't catch an old hand like me—a man who has done Dubrovnik from Ostend in four straight lifts and not a minute over fifty-two hours—accepting anything under a forty-mile hop in an old crate like this. Cheltenham, eh? All right, then. Only push her along, man. I haven't got all day.

Insufferable, insolent parasite!

Where's the harm in it, people ask me. Why shouldn't young men and girls, who haven't got the money to buy cars or scooters or to pay train fares, try to get about and see the world by begging a lift now and then from lucky

old car-owners like me who have a seat to spare? It shows initiative and enterprise, doesn't it? And after all you haven't got to pick them up if you don't want to, have you?

No. You haven't got to give a piece of cake to a dog that stands by your chair, following every mouthful to its destination with great sad eyes. Not that there is anything very doglike about the begging of hitch-hikers—just look at the peremptory thumb-sweep of the beshorted string-bean we are passing now; he wouldn't dare hail a No. 11 at a request stop in that arrogant way. But the effect of these iterated demands is much the same. My cake turns sour on me. I begin to feel, as the fifteenth customer looms up, that I have no right to go buzzing along the highway enjoying the bliss of solitude. I am a rich, selfish old misanthrope unwilling to give a helping hand to a footsore youngster without so much as a push-bicycle to his name. *This* one looks harmless and deserving enough. So here I am, constrained and irked for another—what is it now?—twenty-three miles by the presence of this dour and mannerless lumpkin.

There's one thing, though. I didn't let on that I was going right through to Brecon. I kept my head to that extent. "I can take you as far as Cheltenham," I said, meaning to extend the offer by stages if he turned out to be one of the better ones. And now I wish very much I had made it Oxford. Twenty-two and a half miles of brooding resentment still



to go—always assuming that he will get out when the moment comes. I've known them argue. Very likely I shall have to turn up some side road, as though about to visit an aunt, and then hide until some other poor weak creature whisks him away to the west. They always want to go as far as the car is going, and some of them aren't above suggesting that it goes a bit farther than that—just on to Carmarthen, say, where it's easy to pick up a lift for Aberystwyth.

A professional hitcher, in a recent letter to the press, set down his Code of Behaviour for this great brotherhood of the road: what to say and do, and what

not to say and do. You should never, for instance, start eating your sandwiches without first asking the driver's permission—a very delicate attention. Comprehensive as the Code seemed, I could add to it. But that is not, with seventeen miles still to go to Cheltenham, my present intention. My mind dwells rather on a Code for lift-givers, or hitchees, and so far I have adumbrated these three cardinal rules:

Never stop for anyone who is standing, sitting or lying, but only for those who are making some sort of progress in the same direction as that insistent thumb. There will then be a faint hope that the

person helped is actually prepared to hike as well as hitch.

Never admit how far you are going. Keep it vague until you find out what you have picked up.

Never expect to be thanked. A "So long, then," is about what it will be.

* * * * *

And here, at long last, is Cheltenham. "Drop me off where the Gloucester road swings left," I am told, so that anxiety is over. My only worry now is lest, when the moment comes, this lump of clay will suddenly take human shape, smile, overwhelm me with gratitude, so that all my loathing will melt away and I shall be put in mind of others of his fraternity whose company has given me real pleasure on lonely journeys. But it is all right. "So long, then," he says.

I am free! The lovely unencumbered miles stretch ahead—to Gloucester, to Ross (I shall be able to stop in Ross for a drink, if I like), to Monmouth, to Abergavenny—But whoa! Long before I get to Abergavenny I shall have weakened again. The incessant rhythmic sweeping of those ghastly thumbs will have worn me down once more.

Party Lines

KIND hostess, you, I like to think,
Are haunting over-tidy rooms,
Assessing folk in terms of drink,
Impaling sausages and blooms,
Near hopeless, yet believing still
In some way, how you cannot see,
Poised, elegant, assured, you will
Be fit to welcome me.

I wonder if you ever spare
A thought for me as flurried, hot,
I try to do their prep, my hair,
Fix face, lay supper, keel the pot,
Fired by the pious hope that I
May somehow, by 6.30, do
Some miracle of chic whereby
I'll be a match for you.

— T. R. JOHNSON



"999?—Fire, police and ambulance!"



One Man—How Many Papers?

By A. P. H.

WHAT an extraordinary thing! No man, however wise, worthy, or wealthy, may have more than one vote. But any man may own and control any number of newspapers, and thus, presumably, influence the votes of millions. He may own newspapers all over the world: there is nothing to stop him from buying half the papers in Britain as well.

"Why not?" you may say. "Somebody must keep the papers going." Yes, but in these days we tend to frown upon monopolies—don't we?—and even near-monopolies; and a monopoly of the organs of opinion and information is what we deplore more than anything in certain foreign lands. Suppose that a chap owning fifty papers was a Prohibitionist—think of the mischief he could do. And the journalist who is sacked for writing in favour of beer in one paper will find no employment in the other forty-nine.

But our main, humane solicitude is for the multi-paper-magnate himself; for there are grave occupational diseases arising out of his employment. He does not always reach the state called "certifiable," but there is an irresistible trend towards megalomania. He may have begun in the humblest

way, selling papers in the Strand or delivering them at the door; and, as democrats, we are delighted by his gallant ascent to the top of the tree. At the top, at first, he strikes us as a simple, sensible, shrewd but modest little fellow; and there must be merit in a man who has soared or struggled so far. But as one paper is added to another the bug of bigness bustles and breeds in his veins. The simple, sensible little man who has merely bought one paper after another now sees himself as a new Napoleon, a creative genius; and he begins to play the part. He now collects newspapers as other men collect stamps. He has got almost everything but a London fourpenny Conservative daily, a shilling woman sheet, or a sixpenny Welsh Socialist weekly: and he won't be happy till he gets them.

Sooner or later he insists upon becoming a peer of the realm, and, heaven knows why, he does. Why he should wish to be admitted to the Upper House is unclear too, for he rarely attends it, and hardly ever makes a speech in it. The speeches of the multi-press-lords in the House of Lords could be counted on the hairs of a bald man. You would think that men so closely in touch with public and world

affairs, men who distribute millions of words about them every day, might have a useful word or two to say in Parliament. You would be wrong. (Lord B. is the one exception that occurs to this particular mind.)

He is soon invited to the Royal Academy banquet, and his portrait appears there too. But at last this Mammoth wearies of his power, and he sells his whole collection to another, sometimes without a word of warning or farewell to the wretches who have run and written his papers for him. The new Mammoth, less modest than those who "take over" a big store or brewery, obliterates the vendor's name and substitutes his own, as if he had himself built up his predecessor's empire.

For reasons like this we feel that the newspaper-collectors should be saved from themselves. It is not good to expose the simple to such demoralizing conditions. One-Man-One-Paper would perhaps be too severe. But how about One-Man-Three Papers? Right?

And now, how is it to be done? When Lord Mammoth discards some of his surfeit of papers we do not want them to die, if worthy to live. He will have to sell them at a reasonable price. Here is a jolly little Bill for Mr. Emrys Hughes if he draws a horse in the Bill-Ballot next Session (amendments

about magazines and trade-papers will be welcome, but need not be considered now):

NEWSPAPERS (ONE MAN)

A BILL TO

Limit the number of newspapers in the control of a single person or corporation

Whereas the power of the newspaper press is great, whether for good or evil, and a newspaper by sundry statutes and by Her Majesty's Post Office is accorded especial privileges; and whereas the possession and control of many newspapers is harmful to the character: and it is expedient that no one person or corporation should be permitted to use and enjoy such power and privilege to an extent that may dominate or injure the minds and morals of the people together with his own good name and character:

Be it therefore enacted etc. etc. as follows:—

1. (i) After the first day of January 1963 no person or corporation shall control or hold the controlling interest in an excess of newspapers.
- (ii) A newspaper in this Act means a newspaper as defined in the Newspaper Libel and Registration Act, 1881, whether conducted by a joint stock company or no.
- (iii) An excess of newspapers in this Act means
 - (a) more than three newspapers published in the United Kingdom: or
 - (b) where a person or corporation owns or controls two or more newspapers published overseas, more than one newspaper published in the United Kingdom.
2. (i) For the purposes of this Act the Minister shall appoint a Board of Referees consisting of three persons, of whom one, the Chairman, shall be a person having experience in newspaper affairs.
- (ii) The Minister in this Act means the Secretary of State for Home Affairs.
3. (i) Before the first day of July 1962 any person or corporation owning or controlling an excess of newspapers as defined in Section One of this Act shall offer the excess for sale, whether publicly or privately, and he shall report to the Board of Referees any offer to purchase that he may receive.
- (ii) If before the first day of October no offer to purchase has been made upon reasonable terms the person or corporation may arrange for the publication of any excess newspaper to cease on the last day of 1962.
- (iii) The Board of Referees shall have power
 - (a) to determine and declare whether any offer to purchase has been made upon reasonable terms or no;
 - (b) if any offer or offers be in their opinion made upon reasonable terms, to direct that one such offer shall be accepted.
- (iv) Upon the sale of any excess newspaper the seller shall not retain or acquire any interest therein, whether directly or otherwise.
4. If any person or corporation fails to comply with the provisions of this Act or with any direction by the Board of Referees the publications controlled thereby shall forfeit the title of newspaper and any privileges attached thereto by any statute or by any Department of Her Majesty.
5. This Act may be cited as the Newspapers (One Man) Act, 1961.

THEN AS NOW

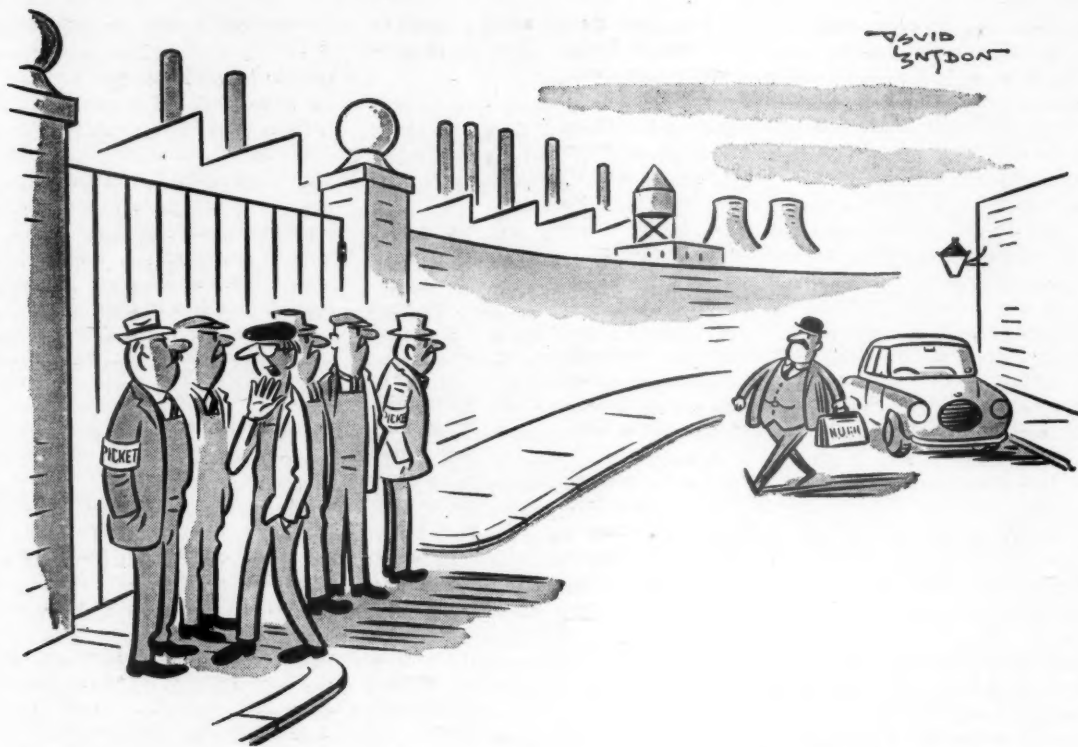
This might have made a good frontispiece for the T.U.C.'s recent report on unofficial strikes.



ON THEIR OWN

TRADE UNION OFFICIAL: "STEADY ON THERE, WAIT FOR YOUR LEADER! WHEN I GAVE YOU THAT BANNER I DIDN'T MEAN DOWN WITH MY AUTHORITY!"

August 17, 1910



"If he declares the strike unofficial, we stay out. If he declares it official, back we go."

Once They're In, They've Paid

By RICHARD MALLETT

I'D heard of Titles Ltd. and felt pretty dubious about them. But then my partners and I were nearly bankrupt when we got hold of this little film, so it had to make a lot of money, and there was nothing in it that would make a lot of money: it was just a good little film. The only solution was to get thousands of halfwits to go to it, and of course the one way to do that, when you haven't any big names in the cast, is to stick on a good selling title. Most of them can just about read that much, or at least there's somebody who'll read it for them.

So it was agreed, we'd spring the fee for a title from Titles Ltd., as strong a one as we could afford. They list their prices by temperature, zero degrees Centigrade up to boiling-point, and we decided we could manage one of seventy-six. (They have a sliding scale

for royalties too, naturally.) I went to get it myself, as we needed it at once.

I went through the main door over which is cut in stone that celebrated motto "Once They're In, They've Paid," and I must say I was impressed with the layout of the place. I didn't see the clerical staff, though there's a huge room full of them—apart from the typing pool, that is—but I met two of the seven full-time psychiatric sociologists, all top degree men, and there are at least four LL.D.s and a D.Litt. among the other people who excavate and process the words.

The whole outfit is built round that enormous machine you've read about; all the rest of the organization is there to look after it, or works for it or depends on it in some way or other. The central part, the thing that looks like a tremendous bath upside down, is

where it actually does its job. They had a quite small model when they first started, but as the demand increased they finally got this thing made. It can deal with thirty-nine titles simultaneously.

I asked why that particular number. Nobody seemed to know, but one man said something about "planning for the future," and seemed to think it significant that thirty-nine was often the number of shows in a series on commercial TV.

They weren't too pleased that I was in a hurry, but agreed after a bit to let me give my order verbally, and sent a little man round with me to deal with it on the spot.

As we went up to the great bank of dials and levers at one end of the machine I saw it was a slack period: only about half the thirty-nine places in

front of them were occupied. The form seemed to be to feed five or six metal slugs into slots, set a dial, pull a lever, and then move round to the equivalent place at the other end of the machine. The little man said "Now. What's your film about?"

Well, I thought for a bit, because it wasn't easy to describe by *subject* at all: not very much happened; it was just a good entertaining little film, and everybody who had seen it had liked it.

The little man had noticed my hesitation. "Don't really feel comfortable describing it, eh? Useful," and he made a note.

"It's not that—it's—Well, it's a simple thing about a little girl being stopped by a boy friend from—"

"A little boy?"

"Of course—he argues her out of taking a waitress's tip that she finds on a restaurant table, and then surreptitiously nicks it himself. It sounds rather s—"

"What sort of restaurant?"

"Oh, a cheap little café. It sounds silly but that's really the main *situation*. It's the characters of various adults influenced by this, and the cleverness of the children, and the way the film is done, that make it entertaining."

"H'm. Not very much . . . What time of year?" he suddenly asked.



"Then they remarried and lived happily ever after."

"Summer, I think. Yes, summer."

"H'm," he said again, considering. "Well, now. Chips."

I watched as he chose various metal slugs from labelled trays: "Female/Young/Small," "Male/Young/Small," "Friendship," "Wrongdoing/Prevention," "Money," "Heat."

"Heat?" I said, and he replied "Small café, in summer . . . Good, I see No. 1 is vacant, so you can watch."

He stood on the little platform numbered 1 in front of a dial and group of slots. Some slots were duplicated—one blue, one red—and I noticed he always chose the red one; he told me afterwards that this was because of my "reluctance" to describe the theme. He put the "Male/Young/Small" and "Female/Young/Small" slugs respectively into the slots labelled "PROTAGONISTS M." and "PROTAGONISTS F.", "Friendship" into RELATION, "Wrongdoing/Prevention" into ACTION, "Money" into MOTIVE, and "Heat" into CIRCS, and then set the dial to seventy-six, pulled a lever, and came to stand with me at the place numbered 1 at the other end of the machine.

"Pity you couldn't manage seventy-eight," he said. "From seventy-eight on, for 'Friendship' you get 'Lust.'" He added, "But of course 'Money' is 'Money' at all temperatures."

We waited, and at length a card came out. "Remember," he said as he picked it up, "we may have to trim off some inessentials; the machine hasn't got built-in judgment yet, though they're working on it. This will just give us some alternatives to choose from."

The top line was a simple string of the words at seventy-six-degree strength that we'd paid for: "Virgin—Dwarf—Desire—Forbidden Sin—Money—Tropical." Then came seven or eight separate phrases, each one a combination of these ideas, one or two of which made, when trimmed, quite good titles—I mean *as titles*. Of course you know the one we did use, but don't send your complaints to me, whether it made you see the film or kept you away; my partners and I are no longer in the film business. The other day I was talking to a man who is, and as I explained how we made *our* quick profit I found myself very nearly calling him Jack.

In My State of Health

By J. B. BOOTHROYD

I WAS surprised the other morning, sitting in a cab in Queen Victoria Street, to notice that my heart had stopped beating. This was new.

The effect was to distract my attention from the dull pain below the left collarbone which has been with me for some months now. I thought about this pain, and tried to feel it, but it wasn't there. It was the first time that I had been completely free of it since it started. Intermittently I have enjoyed relief, usually because another one has started up slightly lower down on the other side, when it has seemed to me that no one is likely to have two seats of malignancy simultaneously; ergo, both are merely remote outposts of the forces of indigestion. This is a good idea to hang on to, I find, provided the sharp stab in the right calf—which, now I come to think of it, must have been what woke me up on Thursday night—can honestly be

attributed to having sat too long with my ankles crossed. Because if it can't it's a phlebitis. I can't remember now whether I slept with my ankles crossed on Thursday night.

By the time the cab had reached Cleopatra's Needle my heart had started up again and was making up for lost time. I didn't think about this too much, though it took self-discipline. To think about an accelerated heart-beat raises the question: is it merely accelerated, doing nature's work in the ordinary way, or has the beat in fact a shallow, fluttering rhythm? My system for not thinking about my heart was to think about my right heel, because it seemed to me that it was a long time since the day at Brighton when this heel was so tender that I nearly drove up the steps of the Metropole while trying to manipulate all the car's pedal controls with my left foot.

Now, as the towers of Westminster

"I felt I should take up some hobby."



came into view, I could feel the pain in my heel distinctly. Odd, this, because some weeks after the Brighton incident I had fingered this heel and found a millimetre or so of fuse-wire sticking out of it. This I removed, with a feeling that my troubles were over. If I could still feel the pain, did this mean that the fuse-wire was not, as I had jubilantly assumed at the time, the cause of the trouble? Or was there, even, a good deal more wire in there which I had failed to withdraw?

A doctor, if I dared to go to one, could probably clear these things up. What he couldn't clear up, I very much doubt, is the creeping sock disease. So far as I know I am the only sufferer from this. It does not happen in cabs, but when walking. The socks, optimistically described in haberdashery circles as self-supporting, creep down the leg and actually under the foot. Unless checked, the time comes when other people's glances in the Underground call my attention to the fact that the sock heel is actually coming

round to the top of the instep. Why does this happen? I can only think that increasing years have had a deleterious effect on my gait. My legs and feet are out of true. A return to suspenders is unthinkable, owing to the lurking phlebitis, and would in any case not get to the root of the trouble. It is no consolation to know that the purely palliative function of a suspender is the only thing that prevents me from actually walking *right out* of my socks and leaving them behind me on the pavement.

I sometimes try to keep my mind off my socks by thinking about my collar-stiffeners and braces. The collar-stiffener syndrome is of some four to five years' standing. Owing, no doubt, to some deterioration in my carriage as the middle years encroach, these bits of lozenge-shaped plastic no longer remain upright in the pockets devised for them, but tend to work into a horizontal position, eventually freeing themselves completely and becoming detached. Sometimes, looking down,

I see one on my knee. As for the braces, they have quite recently started falling down over my shoulders and constricting the upper arm. I have worn braces for a great number of years and have never had this complaint. What has happened now? The answer is simple and obvious. My shoulders are getting rounded. The firm contours of a man in his prime, a man whose shoulder-ends were more than a match for any piece of elastic however waywardly inclined, are going away to nothing. I am, must be, a shambling, pigeon-chested weakling, the vibrations of whose jerky, muscle-bound progress about his daily round are shaking his socks off, revolving his collar-stiffeners, causing his braces to sag, flaccid and useless, about his withered biceps.

I didn't care to think about this too much as I got out of the cab. It took my mind off the rather distressful heart-stoppage, certainly. But rather than contemplate a complete collapse of this kind I prefer to spread my thoughts evenly among chest, heel and calf trouble-centres . . . and, as it happened, a sharp, new, red-hot thrust in the small of the back, which reminded me, as I paid the man, that I had almost let him drive off with the box-camera which had been wedged into my spine, unnoticed owing to other preoccupations.

Home and Abroad

By R. G. G. PRICE

HOWEVER dull the surroundings, however bad the weather, there is an excitement simply in entering a foreign hotel. You are abroad. The country may, compared with the richly varied landscape of southern England, be repetitive. The people may be much the same as those at home, if not more so. The English papers may describe torrid sunshine as you read them in the *salon* peering out for a break in the clouds. Never mind. You are no longer on an island. You are on the Continent.

For lovers of English hills and woods, for haters of long-distance travel,

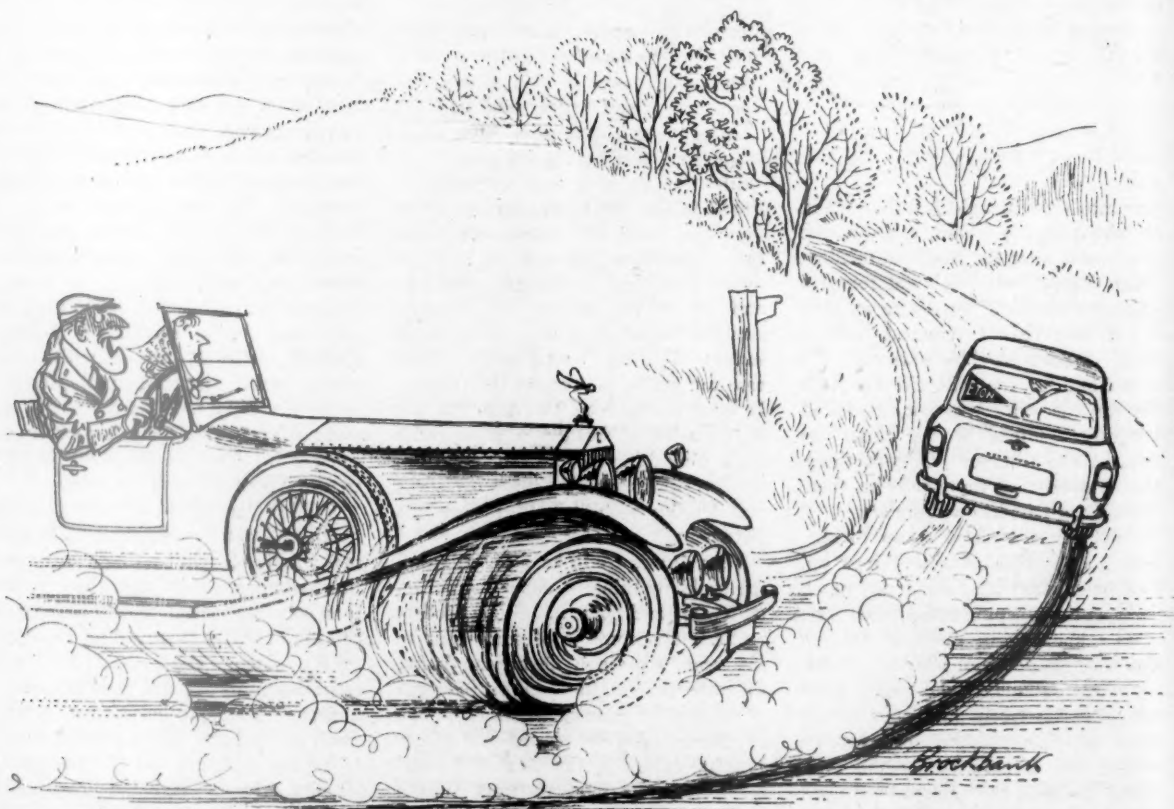
many of the satisfactions one derives from the foreignness of foreign hotels could be perfectly easily reproduced in England if only somebody would provide an ultra-foreign hotel on English soil. If people can be persuaded to eat Elizabethan food in Kensington they can be persuaded to do anything.

The Hotel Continentale would acknowledge bookings in florid, illegible handwriting in purple ink or in typewriting that would put acute accents on English words. Its brochure would be written in English that was willing rather than accurate and would aim unsuccessfully at hitting British tastes

with such phrases as "English church within a short promenade" or "A much enjoyed *concours d'élégance* has place all Wednesdays during the high season."

Outside there would always be a tall, thin man in a striped apron wielding a long besom and ineffectually pushing dust away from the road. On the arrival of guests he would signal to a man in uniform who, as he came out and picked up every piece of baggage in sight instead of making two journeys, would pass on the news to a woman in black. She would bristle from the desk and leave you in doubt for some days whether she was the proprietress, the proprietor's mother, a book-keeper or an indeterminate relation on a long stay.

You would have to fill in a form with "Law of the 15th March" printed on top, and produce your passport; even an old passport would do. Then you would follow the porter into a lift lined with notices saying "Danger of



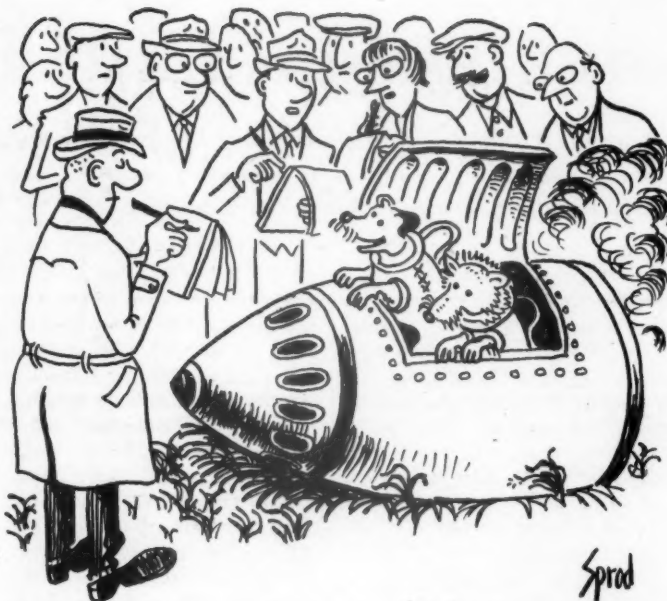
"Well, they didn't teach him much in the way of manners!"

Death." As you walked along to your room you would sniff the resinous smell of foreign cleaning methods mingled with garlic. The room would have very elaborate lighting and almost before you took your coat off you would be discovering that lying in bed you had to turn the light over the basin on and off before you could put out the centre light and turn on the bedside lamp.

The waste-pipe would gurgle. The floor would be bare, light wood with freely sliding mats. There would be a heavy feather mattress on top of the coverlet. There would be a bidet and two minute towels per person and in one corner a large, wooden frame which was obviously kindly meant but served no purpose you could understand. There would be a balcony with an easy chair of gilt basketwork and a parti-coloured umbrella. There would be a solid wardrobe with ingenious hangers but the room would contain only one drawer, a flat one in the bedside table. On the wall would be an official notice about small taxes.

Downstairs the hall would be smaller than in the normal profligately spaced hotels of Britain. There would be, at the most, two chairs; but between them would be a small table at which drinks could be consumed. Most of the running of the establishment would be done in the hall; though off it, behind the desk, there would be a very small room in which the family ate, reared young, slept and did the books even more thoroughly than they were done at the desk. Off the hall would lead the *salon*. This would accommodate, at a severe pinch, a third of the potential clientèle. Small, hard chairs would line the walls. In the centre would be a low table heaped with copies of an illustrated magazine never seen elsewhere. On a curiously elaborate but indefinite piece of furniture would rest a backgammon board, two Penguin thrillers and a textbook of geology.

The dining-room would be much, much bigger. Each table would have room round it for loving, expert service. The tables would be laid with a knife and fork across the *hors d'œuvre* place. The atmosphere would be one less of disapproval or obsequiousness than of participation; the waiters would give the impression that a good appetite was a compliment to their brother the chef. The room would have no



"The food wasn't bad really. We had that concentrated stuff, and there were a lot of rats and mice and plants and things for extras."

decoration, apart from the food. The garden would be more comfortable than it looked. There would be formal beds and hedges and trees and statues in greenish bronze. After dinner a guitarist would sit in the garden and, with the help of a venal entomologist, there would be mosquitoes. In the morning, soon after dawn, gay maids would biff bedding and cocks would crow and iron shutters would be

thrown upwards with a clatter and elections to the Rural District Council would be discussed acrimoniously under the windows and the proprietress's son would practise scales.

And from your bedroom balcony you would look out over Tennyson's Blackdown or the lonelier Chilterns or the Vale of Evesham in blossom time; and there would always be the smell of continental coffee.

Wish You Were Here

Lovran, Yugoslavia

THE currency hardens fiercely at the frontier. There is not an advertisement to be seen. They have a special road sign which clearly means "No Photography." Lying on this sunny rock which juts out of a clean blue sea full of absurd fish (I've been schnorkeling, and at last found a reason for swimming) I think that perhaps these are only the most obvious symptoms, and that really politics is everywhere. Was the manager who double-booked our rooms only trying to overfulfill his norm? And the two harridans whispering among the laurels—disgruntled domestics or Stalinist deviationists? The hotels are efficient, unsinister, and full of baked matrons,

but who uses the splendid, silent villas between them? I shall never know; the language is not amenable to guesswork, as one finds by ordering from a menu the most local-sounding dish and getting a pork chop. True, it had chopped onions with it. Raw.

It is hot. Perhaps it will rain after lunch. Again the language difficulty stops me knowing if there are some handy couplets of weather-lore and a local joke about being able to see Rijeka across the bay. I could swim round the point and walk up to the market to see if the little girls who troop down the mule-tracks have brought their big, black, city-gent umbrellas with them. But I'm not going to.

—P.D.

SOME BANNED POSTCARDS

Bans by Watch Committees have been less frequent this summer, but here is a selection which Public Relations Officers felt obliged to suppress.

"It says this is the only resort completely free of seaweed flies this year."



"Dumping the radioactive waste never made any difference that I can see."



"Fancy, they've made the roads with real tar."



A BOUTWRIGHT COMIC

"In these foreign places you always have to be worrying about the Exchange!!!"



"Alfie! Dinnertime!"



"I always enjoy the **Commercials**, don't you?"



A MANSFORD 'COMIC'

"There's something in the air at Southbay."



A MANSFORD 'COMIC'

"No Animals."





Man in Apron

by *Latry*



Beaufort Wind-Scale Revised

By DIM PARES

AMONG the Coastguard's possessions in the Lookout down here is a copy of the Beaufort Wind Scale.

When I first saw it and he told me it was what the weather men based their calculations on when they talked about Wind Force 4 or Gale Force 8, I was entranced and set about computing the force of the wind myself as observed from the Lookout.

It didn't work with me. Maybe it did with old Admiral Beaufort way back in the nineteenth century before our seashides became what they are now. Then you could actually feel the wind in your face (Beaufort Scale No. 2. Slight breeze) instead of being enmeshed in a swirl of sweet-papers. Then (Beaufort Scale No. 7. High Wind) you could see whole trees in motion and feel inconvenience walking against wind, whereas now it's not the wind but the flying litter that impedes your progress, and not the trees swaying so much as the constant stream of tents, portable cots, prams and deck-chairs that go whizzing by.

Even the Coastguard admitted it was a bit out. It was when we got to mistaking flying lolly sticks for broken twigs (Beaufort Scale No. 8. Gale) that we decided old Beaufort needed a bit of revision in view of modern conditions. We append our new Chart:

Beaufort Number	General description of Wind	For use at seaside resorts based on observations at seaside
0	Calm	Litter motionless.
1	Light air	Sweet-papers and tissues rustle. Litter in branches and telegraph wires swaying.
2	Slight breeze	Sweet-papers air-borne, cartons in motion, pendant litter flapping.

3	Gentle breeze	Eddies of paper, cartons and sun-glasses air-borne, pendant paper dislodged. Visitors complain of strong wind.
4	Moderate breeze	Heavier objects, bottle tops, apple cores, orange peel, banana skins, lolly sticks in motion.
5	Fresh breeze	Lilos, plastic picnic equipment, small bottles (aspirin, sun-tan oil, etc.) commence rolling.
6	Strong breeze	Large bottles, whisky, etc., rolling. Small children whining in telegraph wires. Difficulty avoiding flying fruit-skins.
7	High Wind	Large bottles careening, motor tyres and tins in trees swaying. Inconvenience felt walking through flying litter.
8	Gale	Portable cots, prams, tents, deck-chairs in motion. Kiosks and wheel stalls swaying.
9	Strong gale	General movement of heavier litter. Small children, prams, portable cots, deck-chairs swept out to sea.
10	Whole gale	All visitors off course. Foreigners complain of British summer.
11	Storm	Ice-cream kiosks, postcard stands, wheelk stalls close down. Natives defensive. Cinema and shop owners rub their hands.
12	Hurricane	Reporters from the national papers appear and begin to take photographs.

Odd Jobs

2. The Two Rs in Nigeria

By JO PACKER

A VILLAGE of mud huts with fences done in woven hay lay half a mile from our house in Nigeria. It was a favourite walk of Uncle James to stroll over to the village in the evening, for he liked to talk with the inhabitants and exchange familiar jokes in the Hausa language. I should have liked to join in the bantering too, but Hausa is so full of gerunds that I always wandered away from the joke circle in despair, preferring to watch a woman pounding yams.

One evening, before the language barrier drove me away, I was sitting with Uncle James and the villagers around a fire which had been lit to beat back the flies from the cattle. Some of the men announced their desire to learn the English language. Uncle James took the cigarette out of his mouth to make room for a smile of pleasure, for he had just worked out a new method of teaching English to Nigerians and he was eager to try it out.

"Here's a chance for you, Haliru," he called out to our houseboy. "You'd like to take a class, wouldn't you?"

Haliru looked dubious. He was probably remembering the time when, on Uncle James' instructions, he had taken a blackboard and easel out to a wandering tribe, talked of the joys of education, and started to chalk up a few simple words. To the tribesmen education meant learning all about taxes and how much you had to pay. They had advanced threateningly on Haliru and forced him to flee. Running with a blackboard and easel is most undignified: Haliru had never forgotten.

However, as I fancied myself as a guinea-pig teacher I egged Haliru on to accept the challenge, promising to collaborate with him. "Tell them that they owe it to themselves to become educated," I said, "and when they are they'll owe it to the tax collector." Although I could not joke in Hausa I had a store of *Reader's Digest* quotable quotes to suit any occasion.

Zero hour was set for the following Saturday. We walked over to the village on that day, a mixture of importance and diffidence with which relief mingled when we discovered that our would-be pupils had gone to the local races. We improved our education by going too, and put the word about that the class would start on the following Wednesday.

Twenty men, seated like Yogis on the floor of a spacious oblong hut, awaited us on that day. Haliru, a great believer in unnecessary ritual, made them write their names in a register to which he never referred again, but at least it proved that our pupils were literate in their own language.

We started with greetings. The Hausa language is a great one for greetings; friends encountering one another will ask about families, cattle, weather, grass, trees, roots and stones, for concern about inanimate objects does not seem at all eccentric to the Nigerian. When I acquired a bicycle I was often asked by my Fulani friends how it was. And the answer to all these inquiries is "Very well." If this should not be the truth the correction will follow in later conversation.

Haliru wrote the Hausa greeting with its English equivalent on the blackboard. A family of lizards, lurking 'twixt board and wall, came flying out willy-nilly. The class produced threepenny exercise books and began to copy. Nigeria took another step forward.

As was to be expected, attendance dwindled after the first meeting, the defaulters mostly being members of the drumbeat generation. But a hard core of ten men who never missed ensured that the initial enthusiasm was not lost. There was Jumare, forty years old, who worked as a groundsman at a not very busy airport where he was suspected of keeping the weeds down by sitting on them. Looked upon as the leader of the class because he had once attended an extra-mural caper at a mission school and so knew some English, he always piped up in Oral before the others.

"Shut up, Jumare!" I would say, having struggled to pronounce a sentence in Hausa only to get his eager voice back in immediate reply while the others trailed behind picking up his words. Whenever I repressed him in this way I had an incongruous mental picture of a parent-teacher association meeting, and Jumare's wife coming up to me at tea-and-biscuits time to ask what I meant by telling her husband to shut up. Wasn't it my job to encourage him to answer?

A tall, dignified man with a walrus moustache was senior to Jumare in years. He cycled to the Government Reservation every day to work in the garden of a European.

With two friends, one who sold second-hand bicycle parts in the market and the other who worked on the roads, he huddled on the ground with his back to the wall of the hut and played at Back Row Blindness.

As soon as blackboard-reading was announced these three students lost their sight. "We can't see from here," they chanted in unison when their turn came. But forced into it they read perfectly well. Myopia affected other class members when it was time to copy from the board. This was the signal for one knobbed Nigerian to jump up from the corner where





he had crammed himself and pick his way through the squatting figures to the blackboard.

"What's this? What's that?" he would ask, stabbing his finger on various words and blocking everybody's view. Often it was Haliru's writing which was at fault. He splashed his own style on the blackboard, whereas I took pains to imitate the best English roundhand.

The cleverest member of the class was the youngest—a youth of eighteen who gave the impression of flippancy by

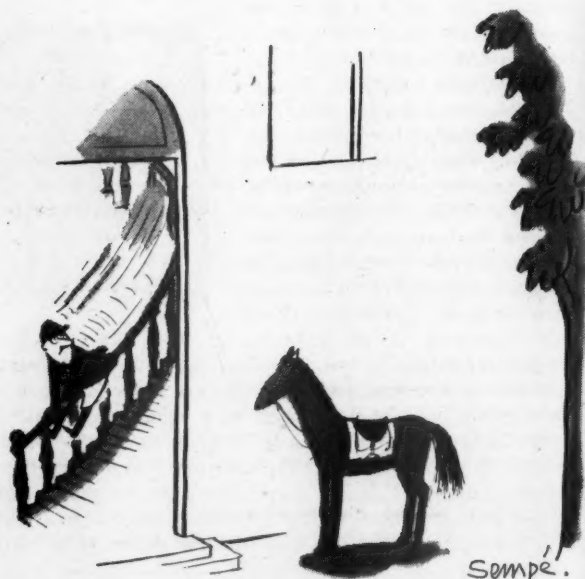
jesting and throwing verbal asides to his mates throughout the lesson. He was the only one who could do dictation properly. The rest seemed to lose their heads as soon as I began to dictate, and wrote down strings of weird words which would have kept a code-breaker happy for days.

We had our late-developer, too. This was a quiet, brawny lad in his early twenties whom we hardly noticed at first. But as the weeks passed his voice grew more audible and by listening carefully we discovered that it usually held the right answer. His dictation started to make some sense. We realized with gratification that here was one who was studying at home; all the more commendable since he had two wives.

Another stalwart had studied at a Koranic school in his youth. Middle-aged and normally dependable, during the course of dictation he became so wildly excited that his subconscious mind got overheated and poured out a jumble of letters, both Roman and Arabic, as though the sorcerer's apprentice had muddled his spells in the type-setting room. I tried to sort out the result while the perpetrator looked on, now with patient, oxen eyes, all passion spent.

A chirpy road-worker, full of Hausa wit, habitually posted himself by the door of the hut. When he saw that the lesson would stretch his capabilities he skipped out, saying that he had got to help his wife. But she never saw his helping hand; it was his method of raising a laugh. Joke over, he returned to his place and steeled himself for his turn.

Audu, the tenth member of the class, scorned such bluffing. He often took his leave from the middle of the floor, saying that he had work to do, and failed to make a point of returning. In appearance he had the spiv's leanness, the darting misanthropic eyes of a card sharper, and a sure-fire tongue. He was forever turning round, on his squatter's pitch in the front row, to crack a joke in Hausa which would make the class explode like a bomb into laughter. Sometimes I forgot my dignity as a teacher and suspended the lesson until I had had



a translation of the wisecrack, for I felt about these jokes in a language I could not understand as Herrick felt about blossoms, 'twas pity Nature brought ye forth merely to show your worth and lose you quite.

This jester wore a different hat for each lesson. Sometimes I was sure he had come merely to display the hat-of-the-week, and when this was done he took his leave, bouncing out of the hut full of the joys, his wide black trousers flapping at half-mast somewhere below the knee.

Uncle James occasionally visited the class and took over. Then Audu was forced to simmer down, for he was always selected to carry out commands. He had to "Get up. Go to the door. Go outside the door. Run around the hut. Climb through the window. Lie along the side of the wall!" In this final position Audu looked completely natural, the happy layabout.

All the pupils owned smallholdings on which they worked in addition to doing some kind of subsidiary job. During the farm-planting season I came across Audu moving down the middle of what must have been his plot of land, throwing up mound after mound of soil with a fan-shaped short-handled hoe. Then he started to plant using his feet in a continuous movement to scoop aside and replace the soil, while his fingers dropped four corn seeds into each hollow mound. He went down the row like a Morris dancer; I realized that in mentally tabbing him as one who lived on his wits I had completely misjudged him.

Pay day arrived at the completion of six lessons. Haliru and I had never thought about a stipend, but at the conclusion of that session the myopic member of our class trotted around and extracted a shilling per head. He offered the collection in cupped hands, grinning at our surprise. Knowing something of the Nigerian economy I was disinclined to accept so many pounds of flesh, but Haliru was not so fussy. "It pleases them," he assured me, taking possession of the money.

My own reward came three months later. Uncle James had received a notice of transfer to Kaduna and we were forced to bring the class to a close. A lorry arrived to take our furniture, and a gang of Nigerian workers swarmed in from the Reservation road to help. Overrunning the house they finished the job in half an hour.

Uncle James assembled them and held up a pound note. "I want one of you," he said in Hausa, "to take this and divide it equally among you."

Among those whose eyes brightened I recognized the wife-helping student who had never lost his zest for pretending to leave the class. The previous day he had contributed to Haliru's final pay-off. Now like a cat to the unsuspecting bird he rushed forward, intent on the pound note. "I'm going to the post office," he cried in passable English. "Give it to me! Give it to me!"

There is a saying that a person reaches middle age when the policemen on the beat appear to him to be youngsters. I now have a similar belief that one has reached maturity when on looking back on your schooldays you feel a pang of sympathy for your teachers. It took six years and a spell of teaching the two Rs in a Nigerian village to do that for me.

Next week: **Shorts Reviewer**

by **Angela Milne**



The Judgment

I DREAMED the Judgment came to me by night.

They stood around my bed, severe of mien,
And asked one Question: "What is enstatite?"

"It is an orthorhombic pyroxene,"
I said, and as I spoke I heard the jangle
Of planets crashing down the cosmic seas.

I added, hastily: "Its cleavage angle
Is eighty-seven (more or less) degrees.
If it were fifty-six, not eighty-seven,

We should, quite clearly, have an amphibole."
At this they swept me, singing, up to Heaven,
Where angel hands received my battered soul.

— R. P. LISTER

Women is Like Cats

By VLADEK

HE was sitting at the table where I am usually sitting, eating bananas out of a bag. There must have been two pounds of bananas in the bag and he was busy sorting out the skins from the rest. I could see he wasn't English—maybe Polish? But when he lifted his teacup to his mouth, one thumb holding back the spoon, I leaned forward and spoke to him in Russian.

"You are not allowed to eat those in here." He put down the cup. "*Pravda?*" "*Da pravda.*" "Also she is watching you—the thin one in the black dress over there!" He slewed round in his seat. "Face asking for a brick! Anyway, I have finished," he said, bundling up the skins in the bag and thrusting them under the table.

He folded his hands before him on the table and stared at me. "You are speaking Russian—you are not Ukrainian—you are Pole?" "You could say so—half Russian half Pole," I agreed, for where I come from there has been much coming and going. "You are here—how long?" "From Second Polish Corps. I am married here, with an English woman." "Ah! And you have work—good work?" "Good work, nice house, good wife—is enough for me." "You have luck—me, I think I shall go crazy if I stay here. But where shall I go?" "What is your work?" "That is my trouble, I now have no work. I am working in hotels where I can eat and sleep, but I am not knowing the language very well and for me it is not easy. Now when I go for a job they say—no Poles! I say I am not Pole I am Ukrainian. They say—same thing! Same thing! *Bog ti moi Bog!* Same thing!"

I laugh, for this is very funny. Poles and Ukrainians lived like cat and dog!

"Also now I can't find lodgings and I am paying much money and living like Churchill in hotel, and my money I have saved will soon go if I spend like this."

I look at him. He is fat and sad, a short man, very dark. I think is no good for him to stay here where all is so quiet and peaceful. In his own country he would be very noisy, very merry, drunk with vodka, always singing and dancing, always quarrelling.

"What are you doing with yourself when you are not working?" I ask.

"What can I do? Once I went to drink.

I drink one vodka, I drink another vodka. I ask for another—this they give to me with water! WATER with my vodka! They say is too strong for me and they want no trouble! What trouble?" "Impossible!" "*Pravda!*"

"Then I sing, very nice song—in my village always I sing to my friends—they like to hear me sing—Vanko, they say, sing us a song—but here I sing—I sing *Andrushka*—they throw me out!"

Now I know this song and there are many verses, and many Englishmen have been to other countries and speak foreign languages and I think maybe someone knows this song. One must be very careful what to sing in this country not like in Russia.

"I am sick of life," he said. "I think I will hang up myself." "This I should not do," I advised. "You will need a very strong rope for you are very heavy, and also somewhere to hang it. Here there are no forests and all the land is private. The river also is not very deep. And if you are not doing this thing properly they will take you to court afterwards when you have recovered."

He stared at me in astonishment, "Impossible!" "*Pravda!*" "I tell you what to do, Vanko, there is an Irish-woman who keeps a lodging house, she will not care if you are Polish or Ukrainian. Tell her you are Catholic and can pay your rent in advance. Then go to a place which I will show you and maybe they will give you a job. There are many Poles working there." "If there are many Poles working there they will not have me," he said shaking his head.



"My friend, we are all, as the English say, in the same boat. They are too busy trying to live to remember you are Ukrainian. You go there, I think they will take you." And I write on a paper the address of the house and show him the factory where there is much rough work that Englishmen do not care to do.

Is perhaps two months when I see him again. I am shopping for my wife. Yes—shopping! When we are first married she is asking me to bring food from the shops. I say "Me? In my country no man is carrying parcels and shopping!" She is saying "They do here, but if you wish you can have eggs or cheese." So I am shopping for meat. But I am very clever. I buy a very nice leather dispatch case, very important looking and I am putting the food in there. When my friends see me in the street they say, That Jan, he is very lucky—he has settled home, he has wife and important job—look, he carries dispatch case. So I meet him and he too is shopping.

"This is woman's work," he says, shaking the bag. "What kind of men are here? They are digging the garden, they are shopping, they are pushing the pram—all woman's work! I should get myself a wife."

I think to myself, you will have much trouble. He is not handsome. Me, I was still young, also a man of some education when I met my wife. I say to my wife I am handsome man, and she says "Oh very handsome—irresistible—what have I done to deserve you?"

"Tell me," he says, "how I can get a wife here?" "It is not easy," I tell



him. "Here there is no disgrace if they are not married. They can have position without husband. Also many are earning much money so they marry only if they like." Also of course without portion. In my country every woman must have a little money or she will not get a husband.

"It is necessary to have a wife," he says. "I am sick of cooking for myself, also my socks have holes." "You might have luck. But don't look for a young girl. There are from the war many widows not so young who are good wives. Also here the women are not looking old. Many you think are young are your own age. How are you finding your lodgings?"

"It is a crazy house," he sighed. "Full of crazy people. There is one Pole who is keeping many boxes in his room and talking to no one. Why—no one is knowing! There is another who is saying I am emptying my tea-pot in the bath and making stains which he must clean. Landlady is telling him is from the water which drips, but is no good. And she—she is drinking on Saturdays and is banging doors and shouting. On Thursdays she is coming to me for rent in advance because she has spent all money. I am telling her soon she will owe me one week, but she say is not true. But is true."

"And job?" "I leave this job—I am not Stakhanovite. I am working with railways—cleaning carriages. Very good work. We are cleaning three or four, have little talk and rest then cleaning some more. Time is passing very quickly."

I laugh and say "You must do the pools." "What is this pools?" I explain, I say to him "You take this paper, write your name there—you are writing? Good! Write your name there, put there seven noughts, buy a postal order—the clerk in the post office will help you and the best of luck to you!" He take the paper and thank me and I watch him walk down the street, a fat man, very sad and lonely.

But when I see him again—what a change! I think may be I see him before some days with very fat woman like himself. I think may be he advertised for wife and he found Ukrainian or German woman and he is at last happy. So I say to him "I see you with nice woman?" He smile and say very

proudly "You see me with my wife!" "Your wife—Ha!" I look at him. How is this possible, he is not handsome—for me it was not difficult, you understand—but he is fat and middle-aged! Also he has no money. "Come," he said. "We will drink chai in here and I will tell you."

"You see, is like this," he began. "I fill in the paper like you say—and I am winning few hundred pounds. And I sitting all evening thinking—what I shall do? Is no good for me to go to America—I am not young man. I am knowing no one there, I should stay here. What I want more than anything—car? No. House—may be. Wife? Yes! So I am thinking. My grandfather is saying many times, Vanko, women is like cats—they like the warm, the stove, the food. Feed them, stroke them, they are purring. So I think, first I must have stove, so—I must have house. I go to agent and ask—for this money I got I can have house? Certainly, he say, little house surely, in little street. But just right for you. So we are going in car to see little house. Is all right, but no stove. So this man he say, you buy little stove and fix in fireplace and keep burning with special coal—not wood, and house will be very warm. So I am finding second-hand stove very nice blue colour in old shop and I fix in fireplace and house is coming very warm."

"I see some neighbours and they are watching me but not talking. But after a few days I am in garden and they are in garden also. Now I buy for myself pig's head to cook, very cheap, but I am forgetting this meat and I think is not very fresh and my stomach is not very good, so better I forget about it. But what I do with it? In shed in garden, I find old spade and I am just putting earth over pig's head when the man put his head over fence and say 'You fond of gardening?' I say 'So so.' He say, 'Is very good earth there, very fertile. If you like I give you cabbage plants—I have some I don't want.' So I say all right and I stick in the plants. His wife is saying 'You like cup of tea?' I say yes please with no milk and everything is all right. She is taking brown bread for me, she is getting milk for me, she is giving me flowers for house. She is asking 'How you are managing with house?' I say is not easy for me I not know how is



"Wrong number."



"George, you'd better go and talk to whoever it is in the grey suèdes."

cleaning house. She say she know nice woman if I pay her little money she will clean for me—I have some furniture, few chairs, bed, tables. So she ask her and she is coming to clean for me. She is may be forty something, nice woman, not thin like others. She is working in hospital cleaning wards and I am thinking if she is married or not. So I say 'You married, miss?' She say 'Me? —no not married. I was marrying but he was killed in war.' I say 'How is possible nice woman like you not married?' She say 'Me? I am too fat.' 'Impossible,' I say, 'you are not too fat—the others are too thin. In my country none of them would get husbands—no one would look at them.'

She laughs and she is liking this. I ask 'Where you live, miss.' She say 'I have two rooms, little furniture, I am looking after old mother but she is now dead and I am alone.' 'Like me,' I say. She say yes. Well, is very nice, she is coming every week-end and cleaning for me. And I am wondering may be she like to marry me, or not. Then I remember everyone is saying is no good to marry English, they are cold like weather. But—I am thinking—they are sending many peoples to colonies so this cannot be. So I am waiting. She is making good tea, and liking to drink tea with me, and house is very clean. I say you come and drink tea with me on Sunday. She is

saying yes and she will bring something nice for tea.

"So I make good fire in stove, and I buy salami and bread with poppy seeds. And she come with small parcel. I ask what is it? Is something for tea, she say and is cooking in kitchen. When is ready tea she put food on table and I smell something very good. I take fork and look. Is some kind of smoked fish, brown with tail and some butter on it. Smelling very good!

"Ah,' I say, 'I know this fish—KIPPERS!' 'Da! KIPPERS—very good.' I eat one. I eat two. I kiss her hand. 'Miss Smith,' I say, 'you come with me to church?'"

Blackmail by Revered Figure

By L. HEIDEN

THE real experts in brainwashing ("an attempt to persuade the individual of the superiority of a prevailing authority") are the local government authorities. Who else, for example, tries to persuade you you'll be happier if you try not to get killed on the roads? How do they know?

Motorists seem to be our authority's pet. Consider what happened to a friend of mine the other day. Innocently, he and his wife tended a garden outside their front fence facing the main highway, thinking that this provided a pleasing diversion for motorists. And, indeed, many a gay picnic party has slowed down, examined his bloom-dotted garden, and then sped off hopefully in search of a spot to discard their city stresses.

Then the other Saturday afternoon a woman parked her car on their lawn, right next to the outer row of tulips.

"I was that incensed, I went straight out and asked her to move on," my friend says. The woman, however, merely flickered her eyelids at him and went on reading her magazine.

"So you aren't going to move, then?" he repeated.

"It's a free country, isn't it?" she replied. To add insult to injury she pulled on the handbrake with a grating sound that set my friend's teeth on edge.

He went inside and wrote to the local authority. "What are my rights in this matter, etc. etc.?" he asked. He demanded an interview.

"They kept me waiting in a small, ill-lit waiting room," he tells me now that he has recovered from this experience. "For three quarters of an hour the only refreshment provided was a cup of cardboard tea. And all the time I could feel officialdom relentlessly grinding away around me, glaring at sub-section after sub-section with which to damn me."

As for the actual interview, he was made to sit almost on top of a heater while two men kept throwing questions at him.

"What kind of grass is your lawn?" a brutal man in a white frock coat interrogated.

"Cumberland turf," he replied.

"Do you have many beetles out there?"

"No," he said firmly.

"Now, you have a very nice garden there, Mr. Westropp," the other man took over. "Haven't you?"

"If you say so," Westropp replied.

"You look after it very carefully." Often their strategies were to take this ingratiating line, weakening his resistance, then coming at him again with cold fury. His answers were always cold and neutral.

"Are they Dutch tulips or a local variety?" the man in the white coat asked.

"A mixture of both, actually."

"Mr. Westropp, do you and your wife feel you could do without your garden? Would life be the same?"

"Hardly," Westropp croaked. He showed me afterwards how he narrowed his eyes as he spoke.

"Mr. Westropp. What would you do if you thought the lady in the car was the wife of the authority treasurer?"

So that was it! Blackmail by disclosure of revered figures! He replied: "My feeling would be the same, sir."

"You see, Mr. Westropp, you make

it very awkward for us. Our patrol wagon driver has seen you and Mrs. Westropp slaving away on Saturday afternoons, and we've been inclined to draw a blind over this so far, but we've now got to act. By rights, your garden is an intruder on the public highway."

"But it's only a few bulbs and blades of grass! What's wrong with that?"

"There's no actual wrong, Mr. Westropp. You merely have no actual right to have that garden. We must think of the motorists, you know."

Broken, Westropp caught his bus and told his wife the news. Then the two of them began the sad task of transferring their bulbs on to the inside of the fence. He hated their garden now. When the last sod had been transported they walked into town and saw *The Bridge on the River Kwai*.

As Westropp said: "I just had to see something mechanical come crashing down. I only hope the passengers weren't hurt, though."

I hadn't the heart to tell him it didn't happen that way in the book, and that all the passengers got across only too safely. I want to leave him something, even if it's only a kind of grim contentment.



"They say some of the Italian players have got their own swimming pools!"



Credit Yet in the Old Bulldog

A MOST reassuring exercise of statistical research into Britain's position as a creditor country has recently been done by Mr. A. R. Conan and published in the quarterly review of the Westminster Bank. Every child knows that during the last war John Bull turned out his pockets, sold his gold and foreign investments and got deep into debt in order to pay for the tools of victory. That is the tale that was spread about in the postwar years of austerity and it was the excuse for many of the unpleasant things which then had to be endured. In part this was true, though the whole truth was by no means as grim as some of the earlier estimates suggested. Mr. Conan's calculations are reassuring because they show that whatever damage may have been done in this wartime disposal of assets has largely been made good in the twelve years that have since elapsed.

The detailed estimates can best be summed up in three figures. At the outbreak of war Britain's overseas investments exceeded its obligations to other countries by £4,000 million. Ten years later this substantial plus had been converted into a minus £500 million. On capital account at least John Bull had gone into the red, though it should be noted that on income account he was still a creditor because the income on what remained of his overseas investments was greater than the interest he was paying on his overseas debts. By 1959, however, the position on both capital and income account had been happily restored and the minus £500 million had been turned once again into a plus £3,000 million.

The main contribution to this impressive reconstitution of our creditor position has been the export of nearly £4,000 million of capital on private account in the postwar years. Some of this represents the purchase of dollar securities by investment trusts and other financial institutions; but the main

element in this export of capital has been the reinvestment of profits by British companies operating abroad.

When, for example, Shell and British Petroleum, emulating the wise virgins and the careful husbander of the talents, decide not to distribute a certain part of their profits but to let them fructify by paying for new exploration, new loading facilities and other such capital profits abroad, that is an export of British capital.

This remarkable achievement can be translated in terms of investment. The companies that have contributed to this particular form of export capital have not only helped to strengthen the British economy; they have also built up their own assets, improved the value of their shareholders' property and created new wealth out of which future profits will be enriched.

Among those that have been in the

van of this movement mention has already been made of the big oil companies, including Shell and BP. They have problems aplenty but they are facing an expanding future with faith in their own industry, a faith measured by the proportion of their profits which they are prepared to plough back in their enterprises overseas. Their shares have not participated fully in the recent sturdy revival in the equity market; their turn will surely come.

In searching through the list of securities for other enterprises which have taken a lead in building their own strength and that of the country by this veiled export of capital, obvious examples are Barclays D.C.O. and Bank of London & South America in the banking field, and Unilever and Turner & Newall in the realms of commerce and industry.

— LOMBARD LANE

In the Country



Rocky Mountainry

THERE is no better way of feeling godlike than by buying two tons of Somerset Yellow and beginning to bridge the gap between lower and upper garden. Here, gloriously unfettered, you will lay out, armed with shinguards and riveter's gloves, your own Piedmont, rising by imperceptible terraces to the Sierras. Scarps and scree slopes and noble profiles of weathered rock will afford terrain to countless alpine treasures, which you fondle in your mind like amethysts and emeralds. The steps you will leave to the prosaic member of the family, a steady fellow equipped with horse sense and a spirit level; but the hinterland is yours to run riot in. The world begins to take on the aspect of a super rockery. On your walks you pluck thrifts and wind-sown veronicas—you see likely subjects everywhere.

Your tea conversation becomes somewhat specialized. Friends are only possible who own the most imperial of purple, the most blood-shot of

aubrietias. You give house room to offerings of perennial candytuft, to arabis, to hummocks of saxifrage. House-leeks and stonecrops and even a few London Prides manage to creep in. Your second summer is a riot of colour, beginning with the aubrietias and finishing alas with the flaxes. Somehow a nagging doubt has edged in. You get choosy. You begin to specialize. The alpine virus has got into the blood. So, with a drastic hand, you weed out. The hassocks of saxifrage make a splendid bonfire. In their place go miniature tulips, dwarf daffodils with cyclamen wings, and greatly daring you dabble with your first gentians.

Henceforth, it is all granite chips and specialist catalogues. You study the alpine *Dianthus* with assiduity, and decide on a few miniature cypresses for contrast. Pin-money goes nowhere.

After six years of a strict discipline of discarding, the rock garden is a harmonious picture. You have spent enchanted hours, your rump in the air, travelling through Cordilleras of your own making. Then you move house. That's life . . . but wait . . . were you not conscious of a slight boredom when perfection had been achieved? Already you are listening to an unheard tune—a symphony of larches and primulas with stepping stones and a glory of laburnum and white buddleia. Your pulse is racing, your hand is on the spade. You are ready to pour out sweat on another wilderness. The gardener, after all, is one who lives for the morrow.

— STELLA CORSO

THE TOBACCO RAP

Eight ways of failing
to beat it



Rolling one's own



Tapering off



Sheer will-power



Sweet substitution



Financial calculation



Hearing a play-back of one's morning cough



Taking heed of medical opinion



Embarking on a cure

criticism



AT THE PICTURES

The Fanatics
Let No Man Write My Epitaph
L'Eau Vive

LES FANATIQUES, or *The Fanatics* (Director: Alex Joffé) is a very good, competent, unpretentiously made story of suspense—and not only mechanical suspense. On the surface its pattern is simple enough: the time-bomb on the plane, and the conspirator who is fanatical enough not only to disregard the fate of the fifty other passengers with his intended victim but even—when there seems no other way—to take the bomb on board and travel with it himself, in the knowledge that he too will die when it goes off. All the detail of the incident leading up to this situation is admirably done, the tension being relaxed from time to time with a moment of uneasy humour (for instance the cold-eyed Awful Child who notices and loudly comments on the conspirator's unusual behaviour).

Skilfully presented as it is, all this sort of thing has been the stuff of innumerable suspense stories. What gives this one its freshness is that once the central situation is reached, once the conspirator is on the plane with the bomb and the victim, the emphasis changes. We watch what happens when this fanatic is compelled, by meeting and talking with some of the ordinary

people aboard, to realize some of the natural human emotions his obsession has hitherto prevented him from feeling. The interest, the point of the piece now is the struggle within his own character, not merely the mechanical build-up of suspense to the final bang. Pierre Fresnay makes something within its convention quite impressive of what is essentially a shallow type-part, and although the physical incident determines the story's shape and there is a final bang, the film is far more than a momentary time-killer. Others who stick in the mind afterwards are Betty Schneider as an excited young girl on her first flight and Gregoire Aslan as the fanatic's doomed, grotesquely pathetic quarry.

The job of directing *Let No Man Write My Epitaph* was given to Philip Leacock, I suppose, because the film has an introductory episode in which one of the central characters is a small boy, and Mr. Leacock is known for good work with children—the last example being that excellent, undervalued little picture *The Rabbit Trap*. (Directors can get type-cast as much as anyone else—type-cast in the most literal way, not according to the kind of story but according to its physical constituents; I'm sure that to some producers a successful director of *The Compleat Angler* would be the obvious choice to do *Moby Dick*.) This first episode is simply to introduce

the six conventionally picturesque people in Chicago's Skid Row in 1950 who get together to become the joint guardians of Nick Romano, illegitimate son of the waitress Nellie (Shelley Winters).

But after this there are no children in the picture, for Nick is now a young man (James Darren), and Mr. Leacock has to do his best with an ordinary slum melodrama in which the artificial atmosphere of pretentious fiction (this is based on Willard Motley's novel, of which the publicity displays a photograph: look, it was a really thick book in hard covers) blankets every attempt to show convincingly individual character, incident or scene. Burl Ives has the fruitiest part as an alcoholic ex-judge with a habit of such self-conscious rhetoric as the title exemplifies, but nobody can do anything fresh or striking. The characters have the air not of real people but of skilfully assembled bunches of characteristics... and not very big bunches either.

L'Eau Vive or *The Girl and the River* (Director: François Villiers) is in the same programme as *The Fanatics*, to redress the balance in two ways perhaps: visually, and with a vein of earthy comedy. The Franscope Eastman Colour photography (Paul Soullignac) is often very beautiful indeed, with spectacular aerial and other views of the river Durance as well as pleasing smaller-scale scenes (e.g. the great tide of sheep clattering through the village street). There are also some extremely funny moments in this story of peasant greed; but it seems rather overdone, over-emphasized, worked up for effect, although entertaining enough. Script by Jean Giono.

Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

There are good ones of many different kinds in London. For thoroughly absorbing, literate, well done conflict of ideas and personalities, *Inherit the Wind* (20/7/60); for brilliantly coloured, hypnotically rhythmic escape, *Black Orpheus* (8/6/60); for amusing intelligent satire and Shirley MacLaine, *The Apartment* (3/8/60); for good suspense with three or four moments of horror—forget all that fuss—*Psycho* (17/8/60); for an attractive story of simple people, de Sica's *Il Tetto* (24/8/60); and if you can bear to be seen going in to something called *Eternal Ecstasy* (24/8/60) you'll find it's *La Main Chaude*, an entertaining story of mutual deceit.

The only release to mention is *Psycho* (see above). Count back 108 minutes from the beginning of the show after the one you go to, and you'll see how long you have to wait before it starts. — RICHARD MALLETT



[*Let No Man Write My Epitaph*

Big Flora—ELLA FITZGERALD

AT THE FESTIVAL

The Seagull
(ROYAL LYCEUM)

The Wallace
(ASSEMBLY HALL)

A PRODUCTION of *The Seagull* as sound as John Fernald's at Edinburgh is always a satisfying experience, and in addition there were the added attractions of Judith Anderson, whom many of us had never seen though this year she was made a dame, and of two young people who recently scooped the R.A.D.A. prizes.

Mr. Fernald's production, which is due shortly in the Waterloo Road, is the proper stuff of an international festival. It treats a great play with intelligence and respect, and is by turns, as Chekhov saw the human mixture, funny and pathetic and even moving. Paul Mayo's lake set is the best I remember for this play; the water, first seen through the open curtains of Konstantin's private stage, has a magic quality of light.

We have grown to expect our Arkadins to be elegantly fastidious and drooping with boredom. Dame Judith provides us with a slight shock by giving us a coarser-grained Arkadin, a vigorous woman more openly scheming; to me this interpretation lacks subtlety, though I think there is enough in the text to justify it. In the scene where the carriage horses are discovered to be harvesting it certainly pays a handsome dividend to have a more extrovert Arkadin, and Dame Judith whips up the tantrums magnificently.

The quiet orchestration of the background parts is in very safe hands. Cyril Luckham's Sorin (depressingly old at sixty), gently pottering and convinced he has somehow missed life; Georgine Anderson's Masha, taking snuff in shy desperation and flowering briefly under the influence of vodka; Ralph Michael's philosophic doctor, the calls of whose practice are inaudible and who would

clearly pass away could he be told about the pressures of National Health; these, with Gerald James's Shamrayev and Derek Smith's Medvedyenko, fit together harmoniously in the mosaic of hopeless country life. And Tony Britton as Trigorin makes out a very plausible case for the novelist who has desperately to go on writing in spite of himself.

But I shall remember this production chiefly because it was the debut of Ann Bell and Tom Courtenay, two young players of such marked ability that I am quite sure we shall be hearing a lot of them in the future. Mr. Courtenay reminds me of a rougher edition of Stephen Haggard; for a boy just starting he exhibits extraordinary power, even in his silences. He has a ravished intensity that is exactly what is needed for Konstantin. He is small and seemingly frail, with an engine, one would say, much too big for his body; Ronald Searle says his angular face is the most interesting he has drawn in the theatre for years. Miss Bell is also strikingly mature, holding Nina's big moments without difficulty. She is slight and pretty, and has an emotional control that should fit her for many big parts. What is best about these exciting newcomers, and a great credit to R.A.D.A., is that they bear no stamp; both are entirely themselves, and their acting seems to be unswayed by any kind of cliché.

"Do you think, 'Adeline,'" asked an American girl behind me in the much-needed interval of *The Wallace*, "that this gives an unbiased account of British history?" Whatever Adeline felt, by that time I was pretty sure the answer was in the negative. During nearly seven hundred years a good many of the details of Wallace's career have been mislaid; I cannot help thinking that Sydney Goodsir Smith has taken advantage of this to lay on the colours in the way most pleasing to him politically. Edward the First, for instance, who I thought it was agreed was a man of wide efficiency, is shown as a sadistic buffoon, arranging Gestapo antics with his prisoners for the edification of his ladies. Mr. Smith may have chapter and verse for this, though it seems out of character in a man who may have been ruthless but was certainly not silly; but I very much doubt if he can cite any support for the final phrase he puts into Edward's mouth, as the wretched Wallace is dragged away to Smithfield to be trussed and filleted—the king hissing, like a villain of



[The Wallace
William Wallace—Iain CUTHBERTSON

melodrama, "Make it slow and beautiful!" What one wants is a play about Edward by an English Nationalist, to be acted beside this on a neighbouring stage for corrective purposes.

This play seems in every way entirely unsuited to an international festival. It was clearly produced for home consumption only, the Scots half of it being written in quite incomprehensible dialect, which sometimes has a brave ring, but how tired one can get of a brave ring echoing for three hours without meaning. And how one warms to the English characters, in whatever sombrely villainous hues they may be painted, for their blessed quality of being intelligible! Where one word would serve very well, Mr. Smith likes to use six, giving an overall impression of blurred verbosity; there is not so much action in his play, which is written in the sort of verse that is scarcely noticeable, as endless debate on what form it should take.

In this melodramatic pageant Wallace appears as an average guerrilla leader, without any signs of greatness until his final defiance of Edward at Westminster. (Apocryphal or true?) Iain Cuthbertson plays him well enough as a gentle giant. Clive Morton makes Edward a cross between the King of Hearts and a cavalry colonel of the old school, and seems always on the verge of asking what won the 3.30. None of the acting is interesting, for everyone is a pawn, moved hurriedly about on the huge apron stage. Unexpectedly, Robert Bruce emerges as a cad and a traitor who sees the light only at the last possible moment. The background music vividly suggests a Plantagenet traffic jam. Given this really terrible play to produce, Peter Potter has done his best, and that is all that can be said.

A bunch of juvenile delinquents, who occur even in so civilized a city as Edinburgh and for whom this kind of nationalistic jamboree is a magnet, hissed the playing of the National Anthem and I have no doubt thought themselves very big and brave.

—ERIC KEOWN



[The Seagull
Konstantin Treplyev—TOM COURTENAY



Jack Dean—MICHAEL REDGRAVE

[The Tiger and the Horse
Louis Flax—ALAN DOBIE

AT THE PLAY

The Tiger and the Horse (QUEEN'S)
The Princess (STRAND)

MR. ROBERT BOLT, if in London, can now amuse himself by popping from one success, at the Globe, to the Queen's, next door, where he looks like having another. *The Tiger and the Horse* will succeed on its thought-provoking merits, and even if we are not entirely clear whether we are provoked to the thought intended, this is an excellent thing. It has a cast of six, and also earns six out of six for performances.

Jack Dean, Master of the College (Oxford is presumed as the University) virtually has the University Vice-Chancellorship in the bag when the curtain goes up on his sixty-fourth birthday, and we meet his wife, amiably distraught over mislaid secateurs and dying chrysanthemums; his two daughters, one hard and one soft; the suitor of the soft one, an over-articulate Research Fellow aggressively proud of a non-intellectual background; and the present Vice-Chancellor. Small significances emerge, but it is perhaps only in retrospect that we see Dean as the champion of personal non-involvement, smug over his policy of leaving other people's lives alone, whether they are those of his own family, or of the anonymous millions, some unborn, represented by the bomb-banning petition for which the Research Fellow is hunting weighty signatures, the Master's among them. Is this indeed the mainspring of the play? Certainly a scene of terrible poignancy in Act Three, where Dean is forced to surrender his insularity, written and played

with every air of a theme resolved, suggests so. Or is Mr. Bolt saying that a life of the intellect can shrivel the heart? Or that all our consciences, here unified in the tormented mind of the Master's wife, as she talks with nervous casualness of mutations and deformities, are secretly alive to horrors that we dare not face?

There is much good intelligent talk, relieved—but should that be the word?—by plenty of laughter, and of the performances that of Vanessa Redgrave, as the shy, inhibited girl, pressure-cooked into a necessary maturity over a sudden flame, deserves the greatest praise; Catherine Lacey as the shut-out wife seizes her dramatic opportunity magnificently, and Alan Dobie as the young man captures neatly the gaunt social seediness of Mr. Bolt's creation. Redgrave's Master could perhaps do with a few bolder interpretative strokes in the early scenes, but makes a fine graceful spectacle. All in all, an exhilarating evening.

At the Strand is an evening of mystery: how and why did *The Princess*, which crushes a puerile and plotless fairy-tale

REP. SELECTION

Marlowe, *Canterbury, The Importance of Being Earnest*, until September 3rd.
Oxford Playhouse, *This Happy Breed*, until September 3rd.
Theatre Royal, Windsor, *The Pleasure of His Company*, until September 10th.
Theatre Royal, Lincoln, *The French Mistress*, until September 3rd.

under a glittering sledge-hammer of din, dancing and décor, ever get a production in the West End of London? Perhaps there is a clue in the programme (1s. 6d.) which amid other idiotic and pretentious publicity matter glancingly mentions a National Yeast Magnate of Palm Beach, Florida. On another page are Producer's Notes, beginning: "It is my belief that when attempting an art form in the creative field the important fact to bear in mind is the psychological definition of association of ideas." It all seems very hard on the huge, industrious cast, many of whom deserve better things. I hope a week of non-paying audiences stimulates them.

—J. B. BOOTHROYD

This Property is Condemned and The Zoo Story (ARTS)

Sparrers Can't Sing (ROYAL, STRATFORD)

This Property is Condemned is a twenty-minute scrap from Tennessee Williams's ragbag. Willie, walking, as she is wont, along the railroad tracks in a red velvet evening-gown and bare feet, holding a doll and a half-eaten banana, meets Tom, who would be flying his kite if there were any wind. She tells him in a Tennessee Williams sort of way about the condemned house she lives in, alone since the death of her adored sister, who was much sought after by railwaymen but has now died of tuberculosis, like Greta Garbo in *Camille* only without the romance and the violins. Then, having established the symbolism of the title, she walks back along the tracks. It seemed to me too sketchy an affair altogether, though it might be a useful piece for drama-students, and that is how it was played by Ralph Williams and Marcia Stillman.

The Zoo Story, by Edward Albee, has more body to it. Peter, a stuffed shirt, is reading on a bench in Central Park when he is accosted by Jerry, a Juvenile Mariner in a white sloppy joe who wants to tell him why he has just been to the Zoo and why it is sometimes necessary to go a long way to travel a short distance. Jerry's way is devious indeed; he recounts in a speech of enormous length how his attempt to poison his landlady's dog led to a love-hate relationship between them; he tickles Peter into hysterics; edges him off the bench; and finally provokes him into threatening him with his own knife, which he then runs upon like any Roman hero. And why had he been to the Zoo? Why, to make up his mind to do just those things. I couldn't, I confess, grasp the basic theme of the piece, which seemed to be now one thing, now another, and there were times when I thought wistfully of those Wedding Guests who were at least regaled with bassoon-music. But Peter Sallis as Peter and Kenneth Haigh as Jerry kept my interest in these two characters going long after lesser actors would have let it dwindle to a pinpoint.

Nothing much happens in *Sparrers Can't Sing*, a first play by Stephen Lewis, a thirty-year-old former electrician's mate from Stepney. The day's events in an East End street provide pegs for the display of a

wonderfully-observed and subtly-differentiated gallery of characters, mostly related to one another, who work little, drink more and talk all the time. Cockney speech and Cockney character are reproduced in high fidelity; I almost fell out of my seat laughing, but a curiously moving quality also comes out now and then—not only, I suspect, where the author intended. From an excellent cast I would pick out Frank Coda as the romantic Borstal boy, who could come straight from any billiards-hall in London. John Bury's set couldn't be better.

— B. A. YOUNG

Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Oliver! (New—6/7/60), Dickens cleverly worded and musicked by Lionel Bart. Vintage Pinter and virtuoso Donald Pleasence in *The Caretaker* (Duchess, 11/5/60). Ross (Haymarket—18/5/60) for Rattigan with Guinness. That lively revue, *Pieces of Eight*, (Apollo, 30/9/59), continues.

ON THE AIR

Against The Law

CHRISTOPHER MAYHEW'S "Crime" series (BBC) has been well handled.

An air of the utmost seriousness has surrounded it, for Mr. Mayhew was never one to seek the occasional easy laugh in order to lighten a solemn inquiry. If his approach has seemed plodding, this has surely been due as much to his genuinely earnest concern about the whole distressing subject as to any surface dullness in his manner of presenting it. Others might have built a more blood-curdling series out of the same material; few, I believe, a more evenly balanced review of our treatment of law-breakers. His questioning of prisoners was always sensible, and found a balance between sympathy and scolding which in the circumstances struck me as being extremely subtle. I don't know how much difficulty he and his producer, Derek Holroyde, experienced in finding convicted men or Borstal boys willing to talk, but the results were in every case illuminating. How calm and reasonable the lags appeared, as they sat down with a Member of Parliament to discuss crime and the clink and screws and all the depressing minutiae of prison life! How thoughtfully they tried to analyse themselves! How brave they were, how forthright, how full of understanding: and, suddenly, pathetically, how stupid! A programme of this kind, not slanted in any particular direction, tricked out hardly at all with theatrically emotional stunts, must surely at the very least provide a useful supplement to official investigations, making statistics stir and breathe and jostle on the page, and even smell. There is something ironic in the thought that it also made compelling television material. You have to admit it—it was *entertaining*.

The Moonstone is one of the most cosily thrilling of all English detective yarns, remaining to this day a good long read.

In fact, with due respect, I venture to suggest that it will live longer than any single work by Agatha Christie; and I know that there are actually those among us who will regard that as praise indeed. Shaun Sutton's production of A. R. Rawlinson's dramatization (BBC) is good, straightforward melodrama and no nonsense, and as such is to be applauded. I could do with a thickening of the atmosphere of dread, and I have been unhappy about some of the big scenes. The whole sequence about the Indian "jugglers" in Episode 2, for example, demonstrated once again how easily artificiality can creep into a scene once the producer dares to leave the safety of close-and medium-shots and copes with a "rhubarb rhubarb" group: the incident, which should have made my blood run some degrees colder, was quite unconvincing—and indeed I can't see how this could have been avoided, without the equipment and resources of a film studio.

Another of those casually humorous TV partnerships has sprung up, in a quiz show called "Pencil and Paper" (ATV). The people concerned here are Shaw Taylor and Gwynneth Tighe, who go through that coy routine of introducing the show (surely not an impossibly arduous job for one person?) together, and indulging in such lumps of soggy chat as "Oh, you are awful, I was supposed to say that bit!" This kind of Radio-Luxembourg gaiety

gives me, I don't mind admitting it, the out and out creeps. For this reason I will not watch the show again for a very long time. Those who have not seen it may like to know that it gives the viewer an opportunity to answer General Knowledge and "I.Q." questions. For a programme which does this, it seems to be very good. (My secret reason for wanting to give it a miss in future is that I don't wish to be reminded again that I am disturbingly backward for a man of my mature years.)

Alan Taylor is lecturing for ATV on Prime Ministers of England. I thought his *The Younger Pitt* a good, racy, spiky piece of work. At the end he seemed to have crammed remarkably little into half an hour's solid talk, but it was a fascinating performance. He refused to paint anybody wholly black or white, but I suspect that he would have preferred to talk about Charles James Fox. I hope he will be encouraged to sail through the rest of the Premiers, and if he is I don't want to miss either Baldwin or MacDonald.

— HENRY TURTON

PUNCH EXHIBITIONS

"Punch in the Cinema." Odeon, Oldham.
"Punch in the Theatre." Opera House, Scarborough.



"Door!"

BOOKING OFFICE

HOMMES DE LETTRES

By KAY DICK

The Goncourt Brothers. André Billy. Translated by Margaret Shaw. *Deutsch*, 30/-

MANDRE BILLY'S definitive study of the Goncourt brothers provokes the question of why distaste and impatience is uppermost in reaction to them as biographical characters, as distinct from the enthralled fascination they provoke in their own *Journal*. Can it be that the role of Men of Letters, which they played so assiduously, is socially obnoxious to us, particularly when one considers how out of sympathy the Goncourts were with the progressive trends of the last half of the nineteenth century? Social reform was almost venomously condemned by them, in spite of the fact that their novels were investigations into the lives of the dispossessed and outcast.

Temperamentally the Goncourt brothers belonged to the ivory tower, were unashamedly snobbish, believed in privilege and exclusive aristocratic culture, saw themselves as the necessary élite, and cared little if at all that they were vain, prejudiced and presumptuous. Yet out of their exasperating and insular eccentricity came one of the most robust social documents of the Second Empire: the *Journal*, which Edmond introduced as an autobiographical description of "meandering humanity in its momentary reality."

In thirty-four admirably detailed and annotated chapters M. Billy presents first Edmond and Jules together and then Edmond alone. His personal attitude throughout is one of academic understanding, although here and there a note of distress creeps in: "They had hardly any capacity for feeling sympathy with anyone." Drawing on the new complete edition of the *Journal* (which is being translated into English by Dr. Robert Baldick), M. Billy, who contributed a biography to the first three volumes of the unexpurgated *Journal*, has so efficiently exhausted the vein of the Goncourt research that nothing further need evermore be written

about Edmond and Jules, who in fact Boswelled themselves so unselfconsciously. Nothing, except possibly an investigation of the actual mechanics of this collaboration—a task M. Robert Ricatte is now busy at.

In his portrait of Edmond and Jules together M. Billy produces a dual personality, a "they" who lived, thought, spoke and wrote as "we," concentrated entirely on themselves, their rare books, their eighteenth-century paintings and their bibelots. Although eight years separated their births they were twin-like in their devotion and concentric reaction to experience. Two separate halves of the same man: Edmond, burly, solid and masculine; Jules, frail, delicate and feminine—the bones and the nerves of a common mechanism.

Materially endowed with a fairly comfortable private income, they dedicated themselves to their fame and suffered torment and frustration in their pursuit of art for art's sake, although they initiated (almost accidentally) a new pattern of realism in French literature.

PRESENTING THE CRITICS



22—J. W. LAMBERT
Books, Sunday Times

M. Billy has placed the known personal facts in perspective: the hypochondria, shared sexual promiscuity and neurasthenia. Note-taking on low life shadowed gracious and cultivated living.

Edmond alone, known by the malicious as the widow, endured another quarter of a century. Novels based on notes taken with Jules were produced in spite of Edmond's being outraged by political circumstances—the Siege of Paris and the Commune. A selection from the *Journal* was published and brought trouble to Edmond. This publication was clearly Edmond's way of keeping Jules alive as part of himself. The "we" continued after death. A most influential "we"! Even M. Billy is victimized by it: the whole of his concluding chapter is phrased as the comment of a "we."

Interesting though M. Billy's biography undoubtedly is, it yet suffers from dullness, which is something that can hardly be said about the *Journal* with its vivid spite and enthralling gossip. There is danger in too much biographical exposition. Edmond and Jules and their *Journal* are material enough. Furthermore their arrogance would have rejected any hint of apology in their biographer.

NEW NOVELS

The Leech. Cora Sandel. *Peter Owen*, 16/-
Fausto and Anna. Carlo Cassola. *Collins*, 16/-

Count Luna and Baron Bagge. Alexander Lernet-Holenia. *Blond*, 18/-
Confessions of a Mask. Yukio Mishima. *Peter Owen*, 18/-

This week I have been holding my own literary Olympics, the entries being by chance from Norway, Italy, Austria and Japan; and Norway won in a canter with a book by an eighty-year-old novelist, Cora Sandel, of whom I had never heard, who is well-known in Scandinavia but has never before been translated into English. She is far too good to have been left so long on her cold northern shelf.

The Leech is short but complete, and beautifully fitted together. Coolly and very perceptively it describes an outwardly solid family living in the far north and obliged, for forty-eight hours of rising drama, to strip themselves of all pretences. How can they get rid of Dondi, the second son's hysterical wife, who is eating up their money and nerves with her irresponsible behaviour? And what can they do about her dreadful beatnik jazz-drunk twins? As the truth-game that is forced on them develops, bigger and bigger skeletons are exhumed. Dondi is a clinically observed example of the bird-brained, ultra-feminine woman who spells disaster to all connected with her; but Miss Sandel's whole gallery of characters is firmly

drawn, and the background of a small town expanding in its brief Arctic summer is tellingly arranged. More translations of her, please. This, by Elizabeth Rokkan, seems to me a model.

After that, Italy; for although *Fausto and Anna*, by Carlo Cassola, is broken-backed and rather clumsily translated—its young people's talk creaks with rusty slang—it has, for a first novel, a breadth and descriptive power above the ordinary. It starts with a very innocent love affair at the beginning of the war between its bumptious hero, in rebellion against the Establishment, and a sensible country girl who at length has the courage to show him the door. He goes off and joins the Communist partisans, and for a third of the book we follow irreverently his adventures in guerrilla brushes conducted by the partisans with pantomime incompetence; but the experience helps him to grow up, so that when at the end he meets Anna again he finds the strength of mind to leave her to her fairly happy marriage. If there is a moral here, it can safely be ignored.

Austria came third. Of Alexander Lernet-Holenia's two fantasies collected in *Count Luna and Baron Bagge*, I liked *Count Luna* better because it seems to me too late in the day to lead us, strongly suspecting the whole business, up the garden path only to tell us it was all a dream. In places *Count Luna* is a clever account of a wartime injustice that so preys on its perpetrator's mind that he has to embark on a crazy hunt through Europe that ends in the catacombs of Rome. This author's writing is inclined to be wordy and a little larger than life; he inflicts pages of leaden erudition on his readers, but with his tongue in his cheek is quite good company. The translation isn't helped by that terrible word "obligated."

And Japan, so far as I was concerned, trailed miles behind with *Confessions of a Mask*, for I cannot pretend to find the anatomically frank autobiography of a reluctant homosexual anything but embarrassing. The private vices of the hero and the stages by which he becomes aware of his inclination are described in devastating detail. I believe Yukio Mishima to be a sincere, if solemn, writer, and he does manage to convey the extreme loneliness of the homosexual. All the same, his book left me with the uncomfortable feeling that I had been prying through a keyhole.

—ERIC KEOWN

LITERARY CORRESPONDENCE

Arnold Bennett and H. G. Wells. Edited by Harris Wilson. *Rupert Hart-Davis*, 25/-

In 1897 Arnold Bennett wrote from Chelsea to ask H. G. Wells what connection he had with "Burslem and the potteries." "Burslem (where I come from)," he wrote, "is mentioned at the beginning of *The Time Machine*, and one of your short stories runs over the entire pottery district—I forget the title of it." Bennett enclosed "my review of your last book" and signed off, "Believe me, dear

Sir, Faithfully yours, E. A. Bennett." So began a long correspondence between the two literary lions. Soon they were on familiar, jocular terms: Wells usually the more flippant and hurried, and increasingly impatient of Bennett's preference for literary style rather than philosophical substance; Bennett usually the more cynical, and repeatedly turning up his nose at Wells's indifference to the niceties of syntax. There is no doubt that they were both greatly helped by their friendship and correspondence. They valued each other's criticism and reacted strongly and productively under the pats of mutual encouragement. "What a good friendship it has been!" wrote Wells in the last year of Bennett's life.

Many of the 210 letters edited so admirably by Mr. Wilson (170 of them appear in print for the first time) are by their nature trivial, inconsequential jottings, but there is enough potted wisdom, criticism and gossip to add materially to our knowledge of the writers. Wells to Bennett in 1905 on *Sacred and Profane Love*: "Your English though is much less clear and simple than it was—stresses on epithets, and a surface of hard bright points. And I feel more than ever the difference between our minds. You are always taking surface values that I reject, hotels are not luxurious, *trains de luxe* are full of coal grit, *chefs* and pianists are not marvellous persons, dramatic triumphs are silly uproars."

A most useful and absorbingly interesting work of scholarship.

—BERNARD HOLLOWOOD

HOPE DEFERRED

To Moscow and Beyond. Harrison E. Salisbury. *Michael Joseph*, 25/-

An intelligent, well-written, well-supported, slightly pathetic book written by an American journalist at about the time of Camp David. His first argument is that things in Russia, in spite of all obstacles, are moving towards greater freedom—of a slightly goopy-eyed variety.

"Then the old Russian spoke. 'What do you think?' he asked. 'Do our Soviet young people to-day have the same wonderful spirit which made them so



ROY DAVIS

"I can hear the traffic on the road home."

exceptional in the nineteenth century? Do the young people to-day still dream the unlimited dreams which moved the youngsters of the 1860s and the 1880s?' . . . Finally the young man spoke. 'Yes,' he said. 'Sometimes people think the younger generation has stopped dreaming. It's not true. We dream of a future just as bright as the generations of the nineteenth century.'"

His second argument is that, in fear of China, Mr. Khrushchev has definitely made up his mind to have talks and to reach disarmament agreements with the West. Writing at the time that he did, he produces some cogent arguments in favour of his faith. As it is, where do we go from here?

—CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS

CREDIT BALANCE

Rider Haggard. Morton Cohen. *Hutchinson*, 30/-. Industrious biography by American scholar of terrifying thoroughness. Pays attention to the agricultural reformer as well as the imperialist, the squire, the mystic and, of course, the romancer. Some interesting detail about late-Victorian best-sellers; but was Haggard really worth so much hard ferreting?

World Events: *The Annual Register of the Year 1959*. *Penguin*, 10/-. Published at this price only two months later than the stiff-cover edition, this excellent compendium of information about the events of last year may fairly be called indispensable.



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BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE

FOR WOMEN



No Followers—By Order

WELL, it wasn't my fault *really*. There was I, quietly standing at a bus stop on an English Sunday evening, when he came along.

"Are you waiting for a bus?"

Now I'm not normally rude to passing strangers, so I didn't retort that anybody could see I was doing handstands in the road, wiggling my big toes with gay abandon. On the other hand I didn't want to encourage him. So I compromised and said "Yes," with dignity tinged with frost.

"Didn't I see you at the dance last night?"

The Saturday night hop in my town is the highlight of the week—in fact it's very nearly the sole light. He had, in fact, seen me there, but I'd seen him first. When he had shown signs of heading my way for a dance I had withdrawn discreetly to No Man's Land. I don't like refusing to dance with people, it hurts their pride, but I do draw the line at Pioneer Corps privates still in their hobnailed boots. A girl must protect her toes. Anyway, although no civilized person to-day sniggers at a half-wit, I jib at paying 3s. 6d. to play nursemaid to an overgrown two-year-old.

"Where are you going?"

No Sherlock Holmes, this. Not for him the quick glance at conventional garb, taking in the prayer book, mentally consulting a private calendar and doing an "Elementary, Watson" stunt. No. This one here preferred to ask whatever he wanted to know, and in detail too. Had he seen me with arms upraised, comb in hand and stationed in front of a mirror, he would not automatically think "Hello, here's a

filly about to comb her mane," but rather he would say "What are you doing?" leaving me to elucidate.

"Church." If there had been frost in my voice before it was solid ice now.

"I'll come too."

It wasn't so much the embarrassment of having him clattering behind me as I tiptoed up the aisle (the bus was late). Nor yet was it the I'm-not-really-with-this-one feeling I had when he stood throughout the sermon. But it still makes me blush to remember, when the sidesman brought the collecting plate round, the stage whisper of "I'm paying for her too" that echoed through the church. It made the "*Tu es Petrus*," as far as the vicar was concerned, a very apt metaphor. When the service was over I made a good job of mock piety, hiding my face in my hands until the church had cleared. I just could not face my neighbours' quizzical looks, people who had known me almost all my life but whom I desperately wanted to avoid now.

"Where are you going now?"

We are situated on a peninsula and the only bus stop of the town is on the quay where the bus turns to make the trip back. If you do go to catch a bus there is not much choice, either in buses or destination. You either get one bus, or miss it and wait half an hour for the same one when it returns.

"Home." The ice had melted now. Instead there was a grim attempt to retain self-control and not to break down completely and beat the lad about the head with my prayer book. Charity, I told myself, is of the essence. Think of the scandal, the local rag would come out with one of its snappy little

headlines: Local Girl Attacks a Member of H.M. Services in Main Street on Sunday Evening.

"But it's early yet." It isn't too late, I thought a little more cheerfully. I might yet have some evening to myself. Good night, in the front door, out the back door and away for a ride on my bike. At that, he *was* on foot.

"I go home early."

Liar, you were planning to rouse some of your buddies from their idleness and perhaps go swimming, ending the evening telling ghost-stories in the churchyard. May be simple pleasures, but in England on Sundays youth must make its own amusements. That's the law and, for better or worse till we come to the age of voting, we're stuck with it. It's no consolation, either, to know that when we will be able to change the law we might well be married and have babies. We will not petition so strongly, I think, for liberties our home duties prevent us from sharing. We're all dogs in the mangers at heart. Father gets wet, so everybody drips.

"Two, please."

I suppose I should have argued but I've never liked that "I'll-pay-No-let-me" attitude in public. Anyway, I was holding my fourpence out in my hand, it wasn't my fault if the conductor asked him first, and if he'd been broke he could have taken the fourpence off me. If it meant losing him too I would certainly not have begrudged it.

"Is this where you live?"

Ye gods, he was right behind me, following me into the house. I *had* said good night curtly as I'd left him (or rather, as I thought I'd left him). But when he walked into the house on my heels—literally, too—how should I have dealt with it? I did, in fact, hand him over to the family there and then, go upstairs to bed with a book and refuse point-blank to go downstairs again. But they seem to be annoyed about it. They say that it was only after three cups of coffee and most of the cake in the house that they found out that I didn't know him either. My mother says that the very next time I pull a trick like that, one of us will have to go—either she or me. My father is giving me quiet pep-talks on choosing my friends with care, charmingly illustrating them with the idea of a rotten apple contaminating sound ones. My sister sniffs whenever she sees me, and my brother, true gentleman that he is, threatens to kick me if he sees me with "that fellow" again.

But I still can't see where I was to blame.

—TERESA BALDWINSON

Mrs. 1960

HULLO, darling, you're home early. What did you say? Why am I sitting up here like this? Do you mean why cross-legged or why on the fridge? Well, isn't that what a flat-topped fridge is for?

Of course I've put the food in it. I shoved everything in the minute it arrived. I've loaded the spin drier too, and lightning-wiped the floors with Magi-Gloss, and waved a cheery hullo to the man who brought the oil. Whew! Now I'm having a rest.

No, not a rest from all that, from spraining my ankle washing up. Not that I can't do a scissors turn in mid-air while holding a drying-up cloth, but in my other hand I was holding the Kwiksuds bottle, you see, and I must have eezisqueezed a bit on the floor and slipped when landing. No, I've strapped it and it'll be O.K. to-morrow.

By the way, darling, I've borrowed your new shirt to wear with my old black skating-skirt, it tucks in so well and that's important when I do my leap with outflung arms—such a pity about this ankle because I'd planned to practise leaping over the banisters scattering travel-folders to show how leisured life is now we have incessant hot water. Oh, and I've worked out some real *West Side Story* stuff for those two hours between dialling the clothes-washer and push-buttoning the—

What did you say? I could use my leisure *reading*? Good heavens, how utterly uncontemporary! Leisure these days is for glorious *vital* things. Flinging doors and windows wide to let in the sunshine and the TV men. Leap-frogging over the children. Diving off the mantelpiece on to the sofa. Jumping on hats, tearing up newspapers, bursting balloons, hurling pillows—that reminds me, darling, don't go near your dressing-room, it's full of feathers and you know your asthma. Oh boy, with my new leisure is life going to be zestful! I bet that with one well-placed high-kick I could smash half those little ornaments on—

Oh. Oh, darling, *really*? You're *not* having it? You're *sending everything back*? You'd rather see me in that cardigan and an apron, using up my old nylons and carrying the wireless round the house and stopping every three broom-sweeps to nail the broom together? Oh, but darling, that would be wonderful! My ankle's beginning to hurt like hell and I can't think of anything cosier, more leisurely . . .

— ANGELA MILNE

Peace Poem

I'M sorry, you can't have a war to-day,
I'm not in the mood at all,
The truth to tell, I slept too well
For rockets to dare to fall;
I greatly enjoyed my egg on toast,
My twinges have gone away,
The pools were kind in the morning post,
You can't start a war to-day.

You've missed your chance, as a matter of fact,
For only a week ago
Things looked so black, a surprise attack
Would hardly have drawn an "Oh,"
The laundry had lost my favourite skirt,
The downstairs flush was jammed,
My attitude then was pale and curt,
"Get rocketing and be damned."

I'm sorry, but that was a passing phase,
A conspiratorial pact
Between the rain and a lurking pain
In the old digestive tract;
But laundry and plumber have been and gone
And I'm terribly well to-day,
And I wish the same to everyone,
Especially Mr. K.

— CAROL PAINE



Toby Competitions

No. 129—This winter I'm going to . .

BACK to the joyless duties after the holiday, many earnest citizens determine that these long winter evenings aren't going to be wasted this time. Set yourself an improving schedule for the dark months, deciding on two or more cultural or practical activities, original for preference. Limit 100 words.

A framed *Punch* original, to be selected from all available drawings, is offered for the best entry. Runners-up receive a one-guinea book token. Entries by first post on Wednesday, September 7. Address to TOBY COMPETITION No. 129, *Punch*, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

Report on Competition No. 126

(Forthcoming Attractions)

Glimpses into the future are notoriously tricky. Extracts from a children's radio or television programme in 2060 ran in rather depressing grooves—space adventures at no great altitudes of imagination, macabre

sequels to nuclear explosions, reconstruction of the "primitive" life of 1960 and parodies of present-day broadcasts. From a limited field the choice fell on:

W. STEWART

58 MEADWAY

LIVERPOOL, 15

for an entry described as "Sidelights on the Past":

I wonder, children, if you know what this is that I am holding up? Never seen one before? Well, I thought perhaps you hadn't. Actually, it is a BOOK. But what is a book? That's what I'm going to tell you. Look: I'm opening it. These stiff oblongs outside are called the Covers. Inside, the book is quite full of what are called Leaves. Each leaf has two sides, and each side is called a page. On each page you can see lines of odd-looking black marks. These are known as Printed Words. Long, long ago, before even your parents were born, children learned their lessons from these books. They looked at the signs and knew what they meant. This was called reading . . .



"Wait till you see the new, thrilling me!"

Books tokens to the following:

And then when Fingerina woke up she found herself in a green wonderland. All around her grew grass and clover and buttercups and there were huge beasts devouring it mouthful by mouthful. It was not poisonous then as all the nature books had warned her. There was certainly nothing the matter with these animals. Nearby was a brook and as she was about to fly to a safe distance—it was almost surely rainwater—she saw one of the beasts actually paddling in it and drinking. What new world had she entered where one could drink running water in the open?

Mrs. A. M. Suter, 42 Willoughby Road, Wallasey, Cheshire

At that time thousands of boys and girls watched or played football and similar games every Saturday. It wasn't until the late nineteen-seventies that sport died, when everyone realized that it was quite aimless. Now in this diamond jubilee year of the golden age all boys and girls realize that no physical exertion produces a beneficial effect unless accompanied by an equal amount of mental activity. My own nephew is at this moment on an initiative test at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean, trying to find his way from Ascension Island to St. Helena.

John Harvey, 95 Draycott Road, Sawley, Nottingham

11.00 p.m. For the under-fives:
Simple Science: how to work out the mental age of your parents

11.25 For the under-14s:
How to win your witch-doctor's badge: a talk by Dr. No, President of the Afro-Asian Medical Council, which celebrates its centenary this month

11.30 For children of most ages: The Toytown Rocket: further adventures of Larry the Lamb, who soon outwits the Mayor of Arkville, Tennessee

11.55 For everybody:
BIG BROTHER TALKING

S. L. Short, 49 Alva Way, Carpenders Park, Watford, Herts

Finally, children, a word about the correct attitude to adopt towards your parents. Please don't misunderstand their attempts to usurp authority. After all, their own grandparents were more grossly at fault. Think back, for instance, to the late nineteen hundreds when it was not uncommon for parents to lament their children's lack of obedience. Having realized the repercussions of this unfortunate hereditary background, surely we will treat our parents with, at the very least, tolerance. Remember, to despise them would only be to deepen their power complex.

John Crowley, 70 Chamberlain House, Phoenix Road, London, N.W.1

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